



President Barack Obama speaks about the nuclear deal with Iran, Wednesday, Aug. 5, 2015, at American University in Washington. The president said the nuclear deal with Iran builds on the tradition of strong diplomacy that won the Cold War without firing any shots.

(AP Photo/Susan Walsh) (AP Photo/Susan Walsh)

JULIE PACE
AP White House Correspondent
WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama assailed critics of his Iran nuclear deal Wednesday as “selling a fantasy” to the American people, warning Congress that blocking the accord would damage the nation’s credibility

and increase the likelihood of more war in the Middle East. Besides challenging opponents at home, Obama cast Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as an isolated international opponent of the historic accord, saying, “I do not doubt his sincerity, but I believe he is wrong.”

The agreement would require Iran to dismantle most of its nuclear program for at least a decade in exchange for billions of dollars in relief from international sanctions. But Netanyahu and some critics in the U.S. argue that it would not stop Iran from building a bomb. The president’s blunt re-

marks, in an hour-long address at American University, were part of an intense lobbying campaign by the White House ahead of Congress’ vote next month to either approve or disapprove the international agreement. Opponents of the agreement have streamed to Capitol Hill, too, to make their case,

and they have spent tens of millions of dollars on advertisements. The stakes are high, Obama said, contending that it isn’t just Iran’s ability to build a bomb that is on the line but also “America’s credibility as the anchor of the international system.”

Continued on Page 3

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Malaysian leader: Debris found on island is from Flight 370

EILEEN NG
Associated Press
KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — A piece of a wing found washed up on Reunion Island last week is from Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 that vanished last year, Malaysia's prime minister announced early Thursday, saying he hoped the news would end the "unspeakable" uncertainty of the passengers' families. The disappearance of the Boeing 777 jetliner 515

sense that the metal piece of the wing, known as the flaperon, came from Flight 370. Intact and encrusted with barnacles, the flaperon was found on a beach and sent to France for scrutiny by the French civil aviation investigation department known by its acronym BEA, and members from its Malaysian and Australian counterparts. "We now have physical evidence that, as I an-

row morning," Mackowiak said. "The experts are conducting their work as fast as they can in order to give complete and reliable information as quickly as possible." A U.S. official familiar with the investigation said the flaperon clearly is from a Boeing 777. However, a team of experts in France examining the part hadn't yet been able to find anything linking it specifically to the missing plane, the



Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak, center, speaks at a special press conference announcing the findings for the ill-fated flight MH370 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Thursday, Aug. 6, 2015.
(AP Photo/Vincent Thian)

days ago while on a flight from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing on March 8, 2014, has been one of the biggest mysteries in aviation history. Officials believed it crashed in the southern Indian Ocean, killing all 239 people aboard, but it is still unknown why the plane went down. "It is with a very heavy heart that I must tell you that an international team of experts has conclusively confirmed that the aircraft debris found on Reunion Island is indeed MH370," Prime Minister Najib Razak told reporters. The French territory is thousands of miles from the area being searched for wreckage from the flight. U.S. and French officials involved in the investigation were more cautious, stopping short of full confirmation but saying it made

nounced on 24th March last year, flight MH370 tragically ended in the southern Indian Ocean," Najib said. "The burden and uncertainty faced by the families during this time has been unspeakable. It is my hope that this confirmation, however tragic and painful, will at least bring certainty to the families and loved ones of the 239 people on-board MH370. They have our deepest sympathy and prayers," he said. At a news conference in Paris, Deputy Prosecutor Serge Mackowiak didn't outright confirm that the debris belonged to Flight 370 but said there were strong indications that it was the case. "The very strong conjectures are to be confirmed by complementary analysis that will begin tomorrow morning," Mackowiak said. "The experts are conducting their work as fast as they can in order to give complete and reliable information as quickly as possible." A U.S. official familiar with the investigation said the flaperon clearly is from a Boeing 777. However, a team of experts in France examining the part hadn't yet been able to find anything linking it specifically to the missing plane, the

official said, speaking on condition of anonymity because there was no authorization to talk publicly about the case. With no other 777s or flaperons known to be missing, it makes sense that the part comes from Flight 370, but the U.S. and Boeing team members are merely trying "to be precise," the official said. Analysts say the investigators will examine the metal with high-powered microscopes to gain insight into what caused the plane to go down. It is also not known why Flight 370 — less than an hour into the journey — turned back from its original flight path and headed in an opposite direction before turning left and flying south over the Indian Ocean for hours.

Continued on Page 27

US, China bicker over territorial claims within South China seas

MATTHEW LEE
EILEEN NG
Associated Press

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — The United States and China clashed Wednesday over who is to blame for rising tensions over territorial disputes in the South China Sea with Washington demanding a halt to "problematic actions" in the area and Beijing telling foreign parties to keep out. In blunt but diplomatic terms, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi suggested that efforts to ease tensions over competing claims remained a contentious work in progress despite hopes for movement on ways to resolve them here at a Southeast Asian regional security forum. Kerry urged China to end provocative land reclamation projects in the South China Sea that have ratcheted up tensions with its smaller neighbors in some of the world's busiest commercial sea lanes. Wang, meanwhile, sent a strong message that those without claims, such as the United States, should allow China and the other claimants to deal with them on their own. Kerry told foreign ministers of members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations that the U.S. shares their desire "to ensure the security of critical sea lanes and fishing grounds, and we want to see that disputes in the area are managed peacefully and on the basis of international law." A senior U.S. official said Kerry made the case for easing tensions in a closed-door meeting with Wang. In his meeting with Wang, Kerry reiterated U.S. concerns about the rising tensions and "China's large-scale reclamation, construction, and militarization of features," according to the senior U.S. official. The official said Kerry had "encouraged" China, and the other claimants, "to halt problematic actions in order to create space for diplomacy." The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly about the private meeting. Chinese land reclamation in contested waters has irked Southeast Asian nations who, like the U.S., want China to stop. Washington is calling for a halt to aggressive actions by China and other claimants to allow a diplomatic solution to the rift. The U.S. is not a party to the conflict but says a peaceful resolution of the problem and freedom of navigation are in the U.S. national interest. China rejects any U.S. involvement and insists it has the right to continue the reclamation projects. Beijing was opposed to the issue being raised at the security forum in the first place. Kerry told the ASEAN ministers that his meeting with Wang had been "good" and that he hoped "we will find a way to move forward effectively, together, all of us" over the course of the two-day forum. But Wang gave no indication he had been swayed by Kerry, telling reporters later that foreign parties should support Beijing and ASEAN's plan to accelerate negotiations on a code of conduct governing behavior in the disputed waters. "We want to send a clear message to the international community that China and ASEAN have the capability and wisdom to resolve this specific issue between us," he told a news conference. "We shouldn't allow the South China Sea region to be destabilized." He said that China is committed to a peaceful solution through "rules and mechanisms already in place." He also pledged that China will uphold freedom of navigation and overflight at sea. □



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Obama: Critics of Iran Nuclear Deal 'Selling a Fantasy'

Continued from front

"The choice we face is ultimately between diplomacy and some form of war," Obama said. "Maybe not tomorrow, maybe not three months from now, but soon."

Obama's diplomatic overtures to Iran, a centerpiece of his foreign policy agenda, have put him at odds with Republicans and some Democrats, as well as with Netanyahu, who has campaigned vigorously against the deal.

Netanyahu and U.S. critics of the Iran deal say Obama is presenting a false choice between accepting the deal at hand and going to war to stop Iran from building a bomb.

Obama told Jewish leaders in a private meeting Tuesday that he understood their concerns about being cast as warmongers. But he made his case even more aggressively Wednesday by linking critics of the deal to those who pushed for the invasion of Iraq in



President Barack Obama leaves after speaking about the nuclear deal with Iran, Wednesday, Aug. 5, 2015, at American University in Washington. The president said the nuclear deal with Iran builds on the tradition of strong diplomacy that won the Cold War without firing any shots.

(AP Photo/Susan Walsh)

2003, a conflict now widely considered a mistake.

"I have repeatedly challenged anyone opposed to this deal to put forward a better, plausible alternative," he said. "I have yet to hear one. What I've heard instead are the same types of arguments that we

heard in the run-up to the Iraq war." Drawing on more distant history, Obama said the Iran deal was in line with America's long tradition of "strong, principled diplomacy" with adversaries, including the former Soviet Union. He spoke at the same university where John

F. Kennedy called for Cold War diplomacy and nuclear disarmament, and he referred to Presidents Kennedy and Ronald Reagan a number of times.

The Iran accord was finalized last month after more than a year of tense negotiations between Iran,

the U.S., Britain, France, Germany, China and Russia. The president argues that if Congress blocks the accord, the European Union and the United Nations will lift their sanctions anyway, collapsing the best leverage the international community has to stop Iran from building a bomb.

Opponents say the deal leaves too much of Iran's nuclear infrastructure in place and allows Tehran to rebuild its program too quickly. The White House is preparing for the likelihood that lawmakers will vote against the deal next month and is focusing its lobbying efforts on getting enough Democrats to sustain a presidential veto. Only one chamber of Congress is needed to sustain a veto and keep the deal in place. Obama needs 146 Democrats in the House or 34 in the Senate to sustain a veto. The White House has said it is confident it can sustain a veto at least in the House. □

IAEA says it can't give Congress its nuke document with Iran

DEB RIECHMANN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The head of the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency said Wednesday that he cannot give Congress a copy of the organization's nuclear inspection document with Iran despite harsh criticism

from Republican senators. Republicans have criticized the Obama administration, saying Congress has not been given access to the document, which they say is needed to decide whether to vote to approve the deal in September. President Barack Obama is heavily pressing Congress to

approve of the deal, which aims to curb Iran's nuclear program in exchange for billions of dollars in economic sanctions relief. IAEA chief Yukiya Amano, who met with members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said he has a legal obligation to keep the document

confidential. "Imagine if a country provides me with confidential information ... and I do not honor the commitment, no country will share information with us," Amano told reporters after the meeting. "That is the case with the United States, too," he said.

"We have a confidential agreement with the United States, and I cannot share it."

Sen. Bob Corker, chairman of the committee, told reporters that he remains "very, skeptical" of the agreement the U.S. and its partner nations reached with Iran. □



Police:

Man wielding hatchet, gun dead at Tennessee cinema

**ERIK SCHELZIG
KRISTIN M. HALL
Associated Press
ANTIOCH, Tennessee (AP)**

— A man armed with a hatchet and gun unleashed a volley of pepper spray at audience members inside a movie theater Wednesday, exchanging fire with a responding officer before being shot dead by a team of commandos as he tried to escape out a back door, police said.

The attacker, identified as a 29-year-old white local man, was carrying two backpacks, one of which hung from his chest, and he wore a surgical mask, possibly to protect himself from the pepper spray he unleashed in large amounts during the showing of "Mad Max: Fury Road," Metro Nashville Police spokesman Don Aaron said. He said three people were blasted with the spray and treated. There were eight people in the theater, including the assailant, Aaron said.

As he fled out the back, the



A police officer walks on the scene of a reported shooting in Antioch, Tenn., Wednesday, Aug. 5, 2015. A 29-year-old suspect wielding a hatchet and a gun inside a Nashville-area movie theater died after exchanging gunshots with a police team that stormed the theater, police said Wednesday.

(John Partipilo/The Tennessean via AP)

attacker encountered and exchanged gunfire with the police team before he was shot dead, Aaron said. About two dozen gunshots could be heard in a 10-second period in raw video footage posted

online by WKRN TV. Police Chief Steve Anderson said Wednesday evening that authorities had not yet found the assailant's gun. The shooting at the cinema complex comes about two weeks after a 59-year-old

drifter opened fire inside a movie theater in Louisiana, fatally shooting two before killing himself. Both shootings happened while jurors in Colorado decide whether the man who killed 12 and injured 70 others dur-

ing a cinema shooting in 2012 should receive the death penalty.

One of the people hit with the pepper spray in the theater also had a cut that evidently was caused by a hatchet, Aaron said. Aaron identified the victim only as Steven because he said the man did not want to bring any more attention to his family.

Steven added that he had "no idea why this gentleman decided to attack us."

One of the attacker's two backpacks was detonated and then found to contain a fake bomb, Aaron said. He said investigators were going through a second backpack that the assailant left at the theater. No one was taken to a hospital. The only person shot was the assailant, whose motive was still unclear, Aaron said. His name was not immediately released. Police initially described him as a 51-year-old white local man, but Anderson later said authorities believe he was 29. Anderson said the man had an ID on him but police want to confirm his identity through fingerprints and other means.

The entire event transpired over less than an hour's time. Aaron said the first call came in about 1:13 p.m., and that two officers outside in the midst of a traffic stop responded within two minutes just as witnesses ran toward them. An officer came into the theater and was fired upon by the attacker, Aaron said. The officer shot back, then backed off but, Aaron said, the officer kept the gunman confined to a single theater in the complex. □

Man arrested for loud noises near Camp Shelby

**JEFF AMY
Associated Press
NEW AUGUSTA, Mississippi (AP)**

— The man authorities say made loud noises outside a Mississippi military base on consecutive days was charged Wednesday with disturbing the peace and illegally possessing weapons, but investigators are still trying to determine whether the sounds were gunshots or his pickup truck backfiring.

Soldiers training at the Camp Shelby Joint Forces

Training Center had reported shots fired into the air Wednesday in the same area where soldiers reported gunshots from a pickup truck a day earlier, Lt. Col. Christian Patterson said.

Perry County Sheriff Jimmy Dale Smith said police arrested Alfred Baria, 61, who claims he can make his maroon Isuzu pickup backfire on command. Smith said officials were still questioning Baria and wouldn't say whether they believe Baria was firing a gun or his truck

was backfiring.

Baria was charged with four misdemeanor counts of disturbing the peace related to the noises. He was also charged as a felon illegally possessing guns after authorities searched his house and found a rifle and a pistol. Baria was previously convicted on drug charges, Smith said.

Video from two television stations show authorities taking a man into custody Wednesday. A small maroon pickup truck is pulled

off the side of the highway. Two long pieces of white PVC pipe are visible sticking out of the back of the bed of the pickup

In the video, the driver gets out with his hands raised and backs out toward two armed law enforcement officers. The man lowers himself to his knees, lowers his arms and clasps his hands behind his back. The video ends at that point. Photos from the scene show officers going through the truck. □

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Sheriff: 'Ritualistic' killings may be tied to blue moon

MELISSA GABRIEL
Associated Press

PENSACOLA, Florida (AP) — More than a week after the gruesome deaths of an elderly Florida woman and her two adult sons — in what authorities suspect was a ritual killing — neighbors and family on Wednesday said they have many questions but few answers.

Meeks Willard, who lives in the rural, west Pensacola neighborhood where the Smith family was killed, said he is frightened and doesn't sleep at night because of the crime.

"This is causing me a lot of stress," said Willard, who never met the Smiths despite living on the same street for years.

Escambia County Sheriff David Morgan said Tuesday that authorities had identified a person of interest in the deaths of Voncile Smith, 77, Richard Smith, 49, and John Smith, 47.

All three victims were struck multiple times with a claw hammer and their throats were slit. Richard Smith was also shot in his right ear.

Morgan's office declined all requests for interviews Wednesday, saying only that authorities were waiting on lab analysis of evidence gathered in the ongoing investigation.

A day earlier, Morgan said the initial investigation pointed toward some kind of "ritualistic killing."

"The method of the murder — blunt force trauma ... positioning of the bodies — and our person of interest has some ties to a faith or religion that is indicative of that," Morgan said at a news conference Tuesday.

He added that that the time of death "coincides with what's referred to as a blue moon, which occurs every three years."

The blue moon, a rare second full moon in a single month, occurred on Friday, July 31. While the bodies were discovered that day in the home, authorities believe the killings occurred three days before.

The leader of a Pensacola-area Wiccan group, responding to comments by the sheriff about ritual killings, said the victims were not associated with any of the area's pagan or Wiccan organizations.

Nor do the murders relate to any tradition followed by pagans or Wiccan organizations, said Keith Vallas of Three Moon Wiccan Grove.

"The entire pagan community is outraged by what the sheriff is saying," he said. "No one I've ever been exposed to in the community would do anything like this." Voncile Smith's grandson said he was completely shocked to learn of the deaths of his grandmother and two uncles.

"They sounded perfectly happy the last time I talked to them," Donald Hartung of Virginia Beach, Virginia, told The Associated Press on Wednesday. "It's a shock to me, too. Everything sounds crazy."

Hartung said he had little contact with his grandmother and uncles and that he talked to them only a couple of times each year. □

No. 2 Senate Republican proposing gun background check bill

ALAN FRAM
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) —

A leading Republican senator proposed a bill Wednesday that he said would make the federal background check system for gun buyers more effective and bolster programs for treating people with mental illness.

The measure is backed by the powerful National Rifle Association gun lobby and drew criticism from groups advocating stricter controls over firearms, who said it doesn't go far enough and singled out provisions they said would make it easier for some unstable people to obtain deadly weapons. But it was backed by the National Alliance on Mental Illness,

which advocates for mentally ill people, and groups representing police organizations, correctional workers and social workers, which combined with NRA support could broaden its appeal.

No. 2 Senate Republican John Cornyn unveiled the legislation in the wake of last month's mass shooting in a Louisiana cinema by a gunman with mental problems. That and other recent firearms attacks have called attention to holes in the background check system and programs for people with psychological difficulties.

Cornyn said that while past bills have been designed to "drive a political wedge" on the issue, his was aimed at helping people with mental health issues to "hopefully pre-empt them from committing an act of violence." The bill's prospects are uncertain.

The bill's background check provisions are far



Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn of Texas speaks during a news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington. With the support of the National Rifle Association, Cornyn is introducing legislation to reward states that send more information about residents with serious mental problems to the federal background check system for firearms purchasers, the lawmaker said Wednesday. (AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta)

weaker than Senate legislation that Republicans and the NRA killed two years ago in the wake of the Newport school massacre; that legislation would have required the checks for firearms bought at gun shows and online. Cornyn has an A-plus voting rating from the NRA, which has long impeded gun restrictions in Congress but has backed some efforts to make it harder for mentally ill people to purchase weapons.

Currently, background checks are required only for sales by federally licensed gun dealers.

People who have been legally ruled "mentally defective" or been committed to mental institutions are already barred from buying firearms. But states are not required to send those records to the FBI-run federal database, leaving it uneven.

Under Cornyn's bill, states

sending at least 90 percent of their records on people with serious mental problems to the federal background check database would get law enforcement grant increases of up to 5 percent.

States providing less than that could see grants cut by similar amounts.

Gun-control advocates said the measure should have expanded background checks to online and gun show sales.

They also complained that the bill would let some people discharged from involuntary psychiatric treatment, who currently need court approval to buy firearms, immediately purchase guns.

The bill would also require court action before barring gun purchases by veterans declared incompetent by the Veterans Affairs Department. Currently, such veterans cannot obtain weapons. □

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American Living:

Will your boss match Netflix's yearlong paid leave?

TOM MURPHY
AP Business Writer

Netflix stirred envy in sleep-deprived parents nationwide by saying it will give its employees up to a year of paid leave following the birth or adoption of a child. But outside of hyper-competitive Silicon Valley, don't hold your breath for your boss to match it.

However, more companies are thinking about offering at least some paid time off, which is mandated in almost all other countries but not in the U.S.

"It's not just a nice thing to do, it has a business payoff as well," said Carol Sladek, a partner with the benefits consultant Aon Hewitt.

Most U.S. employers offer some sort of paid, short-term disability leave — usually six or eight weeks — for women who give birth. Additional paid benefits are sparse.

Only 21 percent of employers offer a paid maternity benefit beyond that disability leave, according to a recent survey from the Society for Human Resource Management. Only 17 percent provide any paid paternity leave for fathers. If a company provides paid leave, it's usually about 12 weeks, or nothing close to what Netflix plans.

Netflix's move, announced Tuesday, set a new standard even among Silicon Valley's famously generous companies.

"This is an extremely generous benefit, and while it's fantastic for the women who work there, I don't know how feasible it is going to be for the majority of industries to do something to this extent," said Alina Salganicoff, vice president and director of women's health policy for

Kaiser Family Foundation, a nonprofit that researches health care issues.

Benefits experts say a combination of factors often prompt companies to of-

fer unpaid leave for the birth or adoption of a child. Outside that, California, New Jersey and Rhode Island use a program funded by payroll taxes to pro-

vide some paid family and medical leave, according to the National Council of State Legislatures. In contrast, many European countries mandate several months of paid maternity and paternity leave after a birth or adoption, Elliott said.

20 weeks, from a current 12 weeks paid and eight weeks of unpaid leave. New fathers will get 12 paid weeks, instead of four paid and eight unpaid.



Netflix headquarters in Los Gatos, Calif. Netflix announced this week it is letting new parents on its payroll to take up to a year's paid leave in a move that could pressure other technology employers to improve their baby benefits as they vie for talent.
(AP Photo/Paul Sakuma)

fer a benefit that generous. First, the company has to be financially sound enough to afford it. It also has to have a workforce young enough to use it. And it needs to see an advantage in attracting and keeping talented workers. That's particularly the case in Silicon Valley, where technology companies attracts younger workers who aren't afraid to leave an employer for better benefits elsewhere, noted Bruce Elliott, manager of compensation and benefits for the Society of Human Resources Management.

Google, for instance, offers 18 weeks of paid maternity leave. Parents can also take seven to 12 weeks of paid "baby bonding" time during their child's first year. Federal law requires only

vide some paid family and medical leave, according to the National Council of State Legislatures. In contrast, many European countries mandate several months of paid maternity and paternity leave after a birth or adoption, Elliott said.

"Europe's way ahead of us on this particular issue," he said. But Sladek, the AonHewitt partner, said more U.S. companies have been asking her about paid leave and whether their competitors are offering it, so there is interest.

"I would definitely say this is contagious," she said. "Nobody wants to be the company left behind."

Microsoft Corp. announced Wednesday that it will increase total paid leave for new mothers to

Improving benefits is a relatively inexpensive way for employers to boost morale and retain workers, says Andrew Chamberlain, chief economist for Glassdoor.com, a website that has compiled more than 6 million employee reviews of companies across all industries.

"We are going to see other employers follow suit," Chamberlain says. "It's like a gift from the employer that can help build engagement and help employees feel better about where they are working."

The standard set by Netflix sounds "incredible" to Danny Carroll, an Indianapolis pastor who took little time off when his 4-year-old son, Ethan, was born. Carroll's wife received only unpaid lead from her job as a special education teacher. □

US paychecks grow at record-slow pace in the 2nd quarter

C. S. RUGABER
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. wages and benefits grew in the spring at the slowest pace in 33 years, stark evidence that stronger hiring isn't lifting paychecks much for most Americans. The slowdown also likely reflects a sharp drop-off in bonus and incentive pay for some workers. The employment cost index rose just 0.2 percent in the April-June quarter after a 0.7 increase in the first quarter, the Labor Department reported. The index tracks wages, salaries and benefits. Wages and salaries alone also rose 0.2 percent. Both measures recorded the smallest quarterly gains since the second quarter of 1982. Salaries and benefits for private sector workers were unchanged, the weakest showing since the government began tracking the data in 1980. The disappointing figures come after the index had been pointing to a pickup in wage growth after nearly two years of steady hiring. The index rose just 2 percent in the second quarter compared with a year earlier. That is down from a 2.6 percent increase in the first quarter, which was the biggest in six and a half years. The slowdown suggests that companies are still able to find the workers they need without boosting pay, a sign the job market is not yet back to full health. That could cause some Federal Reserve officials to push for a delay in any increase in the short-term interest rate they control. "Despite a tighter labor market, and all of the stories about pay increases at various large firms, wage growth is not picking up meaningfully," said Jennifer Lee, an economist at BMO Capital Markets. □



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US Financial Front:

America's trade gap widens 7% in June as imports jump



A sailboat moves past the 925-foot long HS Mozart cargo ship, operated by the German shipping company Hansa Shipping, anchored in Commencement Bay near the Port of Tacoma, Wash. The Commerce Department reported on the U.S. trade gap for June 2015 on Wednesday, Aug. 5, 2015. (AP Photo/Ted S. Warren)

C. S. RUGABER

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. trade deficit increased in June as solid consumer spending pulled in more imports, while the strong dollar restrained exports. The Commerce Department said Wednesday

the trade gap jumped 7 percent to \$43.8 billion in June, up from \$40.9 billion in May. Imports increased 1.2 percent to \$232.4 billion, while exports edged lower to \$188.6 billion from \$188.7 billion.

U.S. manufacturers have been held back this year

by the strong dollar, which makes their products more expensive overseas. Exports of large capital

equipment, including telecommunications gear and industrial machinery, fell 1.7 percent in June. Imports of food, auto parts, and consumer goods such as pharmaceuticals and cell-phones surged as Americans spent more.

Even so, the deficit narrowed in the second quarter compared with the first, boosting the economy. Trade has been volatile this year. Labor disputes at West Coast ports in the first quarter delayed imports and the shipment of U.S. goods overseas. That lowered exports and pushed the deficit to a three-year high in March of \$50.6 billion.

"The current level of ... goods exports remains far

below trend and we have yet to see a decisive rebound following the resolution of the West coast port strike," said Laura Rosner, an economist at French bank BNP Paribas.

International trade subtracted about 2 percentage points from growth in the January-March quarter, when the economy expanded at an anemic annual rate of just 0.6 percent. It then added 0.1 percentage point in the April-June quarter, when growth picked up to a 2.3 percent pace.

The dollar has risen about 14 percent in value against overseas currencies in the past year. That also makes foreign products cheaper in the U.S. □

Growth at American services firms surges to record in July

PAUL WISEMAN

AP Economics

WASHINGTON (AP) — Business at U.S. services companies surged in July, the Institute for Supply Management reported Wednesday.

The institute said its services index rose to 60.3 last month, highest since the index was created in 2008 and up from 56 in June. Any reading above 50 shows growth in the services sector.

Its measure of business activity for services firms rose to 64.9 from 61.5 in June. New orders and employment were also up strongly. Export orders also rose at a faster pace, despite a strong dollar that makes

U.S. products and services more expensive in overseas markets.

Anthony Nieves, chairman of the institute's services survey committee, said growth in services usually cools during the summer, so the July surge "is a bit unusual." He said a strong job market might be helping services firms. Unemployment has tumbled to a seven-year low of 5.3 percent. The ISM is a trade group of purchasing managers. Its services survey covers businesses that employ 90 percent of workers, including retail, construction, health care and financial services companies.

Fifteen of 18 services industries reported growth. □



SPECIAL DINNER MENU

Soups

* Spicy Beef Soup / Madam Jeanette

*French Onion Soup

or

Keshi Yena "Local"

Ovenbaked Gouda cheese filled with ragout of chicken breast, celery, cashew nuts, raisins, onions and olives

or

Crispy Asian Salad

Rice noodle and crispy veggies served with ginger sesame dressing

Entrees

Chicken Alfredo Pasta served on homemade fettuccini pasta topped with shaved parmesan

or

Grilled marinated Skirted Steak and Shrimps

served with seasonal veggies, herbed potatoes and chimichuri sauce

or

Panfried Filet of Grouper

served with stirfried veggies, mashed potatoes and creamy clam sauce

Dessert

Key Lime Pie

or

Chocolate Cheese Cake

Coffee/Tea

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Iran says it will present Syria initiative to UN chief

BASSEM MROUE
Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Iran will soon submit a four-point plan to end the Syrian civil war to the United Nations, its deputy foreign minister said Wednesday. State-run news agency IRNA quoted Hossein Amir Abdollahian as saying the new initiative will be submitted to the U.N. chief af-

ter "detailed consultations between Tehran and Damascus." Iran is a key ally of President Bashar Assad's embattled government. Abdollahian did not elaborate on the plan. But the comments came as Tehran hosted Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Moallem and Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov this week to discuss

possible ways to end the conflict in Syria, which has killed at least 250,000 people. Abdollahian said most regional players now realize that there is no military solution to the Syria crisis and would like to find a political solution. Meanwhile, Syrian government forces backed by members of Lebanon's Shiite Hezbollah group

advanced Wednesday from different directions in the mountain resort of Zabadani near the border with Lebanon, Syrian state media reported. The fighting came as the ultraconservative Ahrar al-Sham insurgent group said that it has stopped communicating with Iranian mediators after they insisted that fighters and

residents leave the resort. Ahrar al-Sham said the government aims to clear out the area's Sunni Muslim population. Syrian opposition groups have accused the government and Hezbollah of displacing thousands of Sunnis from areas along the border with Lebanon and preventing them from returning to their homes. □

Turkey says 'extensive' fight against IS to start soon

SUZAN FRASER
Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — An armed drone taking off from Turkey launched a strike on the Islamic State group on Wednesday, a U.S. official said, as Turkey's foreign minister said American aircraft had begun to arrive at a Turkish base close to the border with Syria and an "extensive" fight against the extremists would begin soon.

Also Wednesday, Syria's foreign minister said Damascus would support efforts against IS, as long as the fight is coordinated with the Syrian government.

Ending its reluctance, Turkey carried out airstrikes against IS targets in Syria late last month and agreed to allow U.S. warplanes to use Incirlik Air Base for operations, taking a more front-line role in the U.S.-led coalition's fight against the extremists.

Pentagon spokesman Navy Capt. Jeff Davis said a drone had launched an airstrike from Turkey for the



A United States Navy airplane takes off from the Incirlik Air Base, on the outskirts of the city of Adana, southern Turkey. An armed drone taking off from Turkey launched a strike on the Islamic State group on Wednesday, a U.S. official said, as Turkey's foreign minister said American aircraft had begun to arrive at a Turkish base close to the border with Syria and an "extensive" fight against the extremists would begin soon.
(AP Photo/Emrah Gurel)

first time on Wednesday, but provided no further details.

He said the U.S. was planning to fly manned aircraft out of Turkey but that had not yet begun.

U.S. officials had said the first armed drone missions out of Turkey began last

weekend although they did not conduct airstrikes at the time.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of an ASEAN meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said the battle against the IS from the Turkish air base would

begin soon, but didn't elaborate.

"As part of the agreement reached with the United States, we have made great strides on the technicalities of Incirlik's use and the U.S. aircraft have started to arrive," the state-run Anadolu Agency quoted

him as telling reporters. "Soon we will together start an extensive battle against Daesh." He was using the Arabic acronym for the Islamic State group.

The Turkish minister also told reporters that once the "effective" fight has begun, the ground would become safer for moderate opposition forces fighting IS.

His comments came following reports that members of the Free Syrian Army who went through a U.S. training program to fight Islamic State militants were captured by the al-Qaida-linked Nusra Front in Syria.

Turkey on Wednesday named a new chief of military staff as it takes on a more active role in the fight against IS. Land Forces Commander Gen. Hulusi Akar was appointed to replace the current military chief who retires at the end of a three-day, annual High Military Council meeting which decides on promotions, retirements and dismissals within Turkey's armed forces. □

Pro-government troops take much of Yemen province

AHMED AL-HAJ
Associated Press

SANAA, Yemen (AP) — Yemen's pro-government forces have retaken most of the strategic province of Lahj, once the main southern enclave of Shiite rebels who control the country's capital and much of the north, officials and witnesses said Wednesday. Pro-government forces have made a series of gains in recent weeks in

southern Yemen with the help of a Saudi-led and U.S.-backed coalition that has been waging an air campaign against the Iran-allied rebels and allied military units since March. The officials say the rebels, known as Houthis, appear to have lost most of their heavy weapons in a battle Monday to defend the key military base of al-Anad in Lahj. There were no immediate

reports on casualties from the fighting in the strategic province. Witnesses say the remaining rebels in Lahj have taken refuge in surrounding farmland.

Houthi officials could not immediately be reached for comment.

Meanwhile in Taiz, Yemen's third-largest city, five civilians were killed in clashes between rebels and pro-government troops at a state security building that

the Houthis have been using as a base since March, medical officials said.

Pro-government forces have cordoned off the southern port city of Aden and set up security checkpoints. Those residing outside Aden are not allowed to enter the city for fear they may be "Houthi sleeper cells," a security official said.

Meanwhile, gunmen killed a rebel leader and two

of his companions at a checkpoint near the country's capital, Sanaa, late Tuesday night, security officials and the Houthi rebels' media center said.

Officials identified the leader as Ahmed al-Mahdi. Attacks on rebel leaders in the country's Houthi-controlled north are rare. All officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief reporters. □

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Youth camp resumes 4 years after massacre on Norwegian isle

MATTI HUUHTANEN

Associated Press

UTOYA, Norway (AP) —

Four years ago a right-wing extremist gunned down 69 people, shattering the tranquility on the idyllic Norwegian island of Utoya after killing eight in a bomb blast at government buildings in the center of the capital Oslo.

This week, a flood of newcomers will be arriving on the island as the Labor Party's youth camp opens for the first time since the massacre on July 22, 2011.

Emilie Bersaas, a camp organizer, says they won't allow "that dark day (to) overshadow the nice and bright" memories of past camps or future weekend youth meetings and social events organized by the party's youth wing, which owns the island about 40 kilometers (25 miles) from the capital, Oslo.

More than 1,000 students have enrolled for three days of seminars on politics that start Friday. Private visitors a day earlier will include NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, a former Labor Party leader who was also Norway's prime minister at the time of the massacre.

Many of the island's traditional red-and-white wooden buildings have been renovated and construction continued feverishly Wednesday to complete new conference and meeting rooms in Scandinavian-style glass and wood design. A bright circular steel memorial engraved with the victims' names has been given pride of place among pine trees on a secluded spot overlooking the Tyrifjorden



Pennants hanging up on Utoya, Norway, Wednesday, Aug. 5, 2015, a day before members of the AUF arrive on the island for the first summer camp since the massacre in 2011 in which 69 people were killed. Self-styled "militant nationalist" Anders Behring Breivik walked through the island on a murderous rampage on July 22, 2011, after killing eight people with a car bomb at the government headquarters in the capital, Oslo.

(Jon Olav Nesvold /NTB scanpix via AP)

lake. Mani Hussaini, president of the youth group, believes that a good balance was found in constructing new buildings and

restoring the old, describing it as "an important step" for going forward after the events of 2011.

Utoya will "always (be) a

place where we honor and remember our comrades, a place to learn and a place for political engagement," he told reporters.

The murderous rampage of the self-styled "militant nationalist" Anders Behring Breivik, who randomly shot students as he walked through the island, shocked the nation of 5 million in the far north of Europe. About one in four people in Norway were affected by the massacre, through connections with family, friends, work or acquaintances of victims.

It also left lasting traces on Utoya, including the dark green cafeteria which bears the bullet marks of the murder of 13 people. It has not been renovated and will open as a center for learning after another building has been built around it.

Survivor Ragnhild Kaski, secretary general of the youth organization, remembers with glee and excitement how she gave her first political speech in that fateful cafeteria, tinged with deep sorrow and emptiness at the loss of her friends. □

367 migrants rescued off Libya; 25 bodies found

FRANCES D'EMILIO

COLLEEN BARRY

Associated Press

ROME (AP) — A fishing boat crowded with migrants overturned Wednesday in the Mediterranean off Libya as rescuers approached, and the Italian coast guard and Irish navy said at least 367 people were saved, although 25 bodies also were found in the latest human smuggling tragedy.

Coast guard Cmdr. Filippo Marini said the rescue operation, involving seven ships, was still underway several hours after the

capsizing. Survivors indicated that between 400 and 600 people were aboard the smugglers' boat, he added. The exact number of those aboard might never be known, but authorities hoped to have a better idea after survivors are interviewed.

The Irish naval vessel Le Niamh was one of the ships tasked by the coast guard to speed to the rescue of the boat shortly before noon, Irish Capt. Donal Gallagher told The Associated Press by phone.

The Le Niamh arrived near the fishing boat, Marini

said, and "at the sight of it, the migrants shifted" to one side and their boat capsized.

An Irish Defense Forces statement said that when it reached the scene, the Le Niamh deployed two rigid hull inflatable boats on either side of the vessel "as per standard procedure. However, the vessel capsized." The Le Niamh deployed life rafts and other rigid hulled boats, it added.

An Italian military helicopter dropped additional life rafts into the sea, where 150 people were initially

spotted, Gallagher said.

By evening, the Le Niamh had 367 people aboard, including 13 children, the Irish military said.

Since the water was warm, rescuers worked with hope of finding more survivors, even as dusk approached. The vessel was reported to be 110 kilometers (about 75 miles) northwest of Tripoli, Libya's capital.

In April, a crammed fishing boat sank, taking down with it perhaps as many as 800 migrants trapped inside the hold. Only 28 people, including two alleged smugglers, survived. □

Egypt to unveil Suez Canal extension in hope of a new era

BRIAN ROHAN
Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Egypt is to unveil a major extension of the Suez Canal on Thursday, a mega-project that has emerged as a corner-

stone of President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi's efforts to restore national pride and revive the economy after years of unrest.

seen as marking Egypt's decisive break with its colonial past. That sparked the second of four wars with Israel, including a 1973 offensive launched across the canal that Egyptians

overthrow of two presidents, Egypt is back. "Our culture can be very sentimental, and this was the first time Egyptians have been so galvanized," said Adel Beshai, by a semi-independent authority with 25,000 employees that is considered one of the country's most competent bodies. "It is opening infinite horizons. It is going to be

traffic accommodating the world's largest ships. With a depth of 24 meters (79 feet), the canal now allows the simultaneous passage of ships with up to 66 ft. draught.

Originally planned as a three-year project, el-Sissi ordered the new segments to be finished in just one, citing the pressing need for an economic boost. Work has been non-stop ever since, and at one point 43 massive dredging machines were cranking away.

The canal drew in in a record \$5.3 billion last year, a figure the government estimates it can raise to \$13.2 billion by 2023 if it doubles the number of ships transiting daily to 97. Economists and shippers, however, say that's overly optimistic.

"It's not about capacity, it all depends on trade between East and West, growth in the world economy, especially in Europe, and how the (authority) handles its fees," said Xu Zhibin, managing director for the Egyptian affiliate of China's state-owned COSCO, one of the world's top container shippers.

The project's success also depends on the security situation. To the east of the canal, a long-running insurgency in the Sinai Peninsula has intensified since the military overthrow of Islamist President Mohammed Morsi in 2013. □



An Egyptian soldier stands guard near the Suez Canal as an American container ship crosses the Suez Canal in Ismailia, Egypt. Egypt on Thursday, Aug. 6, 2015, will unveil a major extension of the Suez Canal, a mega-project that has emerged as a cornerstone of President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi's efforts to restore national pride and revive the economy after years of unrest.

(AP Photo/Amr Nabil)

stone of President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi's efforts to restore national pride and revive the economy after years of unrest.

The 1869 inauguration of the canal linking the Red Sea to the Mediterranean was hailed as a leap into the modern age, and President Gamal Abdel-Nasser's nationalization of the British and French-run waterway in 1956 was

celebrate as their greatest military victory.

The government hopes for another historic moment Thursday, when it unveils an \$8.5 billion extension of the waterway funded entirely by Egyptians, without foreign aid. The media and government supporters across the board have breathlessly repeated the same message — after four years of strife and the

professor of economics at the American University in Cairo. "It was a brilliant idea by el-Sissi — the Egyptians now own the canal." He views the expansion as the first step in a new area of development, free of the public sector's notoriously crippling bureaucracy. The key global trade route is already one of Egypt's top foreign currency earners, and is run

handled outside the ossified bureaucracy that has been holding us back. What is being done there is done with extreme efficiency and a scientific approach," Beshai said.

The new extension involved digging and dredging along 72 kilometers (45 miles) of the 193-kilometer canal, making a parallel waterway at its middle that will facilitate two-way

Islamic State group in Egypt threatens to kill Croat hostage

BRIAN ROHAN
Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — An Islamic State affiliate released a video Wednesday threatening to kill a Croatian hostage if Egyptian authorities do not release "Muslim women" held in prison within 48 hours, a day before the country plans to unveil a highly promoted new extension of the Suez Canal.

The video, circulated on social media by Islamic State sympathizers, shows a man wearing a yellow jumpsuit kneeling in

the desert before a knife-wielding masked man in military fatigues. A black Islamic flag often used by the extremists flutters next to him. The video identifies itself as coming from the media arm of the Islamic State affiliate in Egypt's lawless Sinai Peninsula.

Reading calmly from a note in English, the man identifies himself as Tomislav Salopek, a married, 30-year-old father of two, adding that Islamic State fighters captured him on July 22. If Egyptian authorities do not act, he said,

"the soldiers from Wilayet Sina will kill me." Wilayet Sina is the Arabic phrase for the Egyptian group calling itself the Sinai Province of the Islamic State. It was not clear where the video was shot. The Associated Press could not independently verify the footage, entitled "A Message to the Egyptian Government," though it was shot in the style of previous Islamic State propaganda videos in which they threaten and behead hostages.

The reference to "Mus-

lim women" apparently referred to Islamists who have been arrested in a broad government crackdown on dissent. Egypt, a majority Muslim country, now holds thousands of Islamists and suspected supporters of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood group in prison following the 2013 military overthrow of Islamist President Mohammed Morsi. Croatia's Foreign Ministry late last month said that one of its nationals with the same initials had been kidnapped in Cairo on July 22 while

on the way to work. The company, which Salopek identified as France's CGG Ardiseis, works in the oil and gas sector and has a branch office in Cairo's leafy suburb of Maadi, where many expats and diplomats live. Calls to CGG Ardiseis' office in Cairo were not immediately answered. Croatian state television read out a statement on air Wednesday night saying the government was "doing all it can to promptly resolve the difficult situation," without elaborating. □



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Venezuela ruling party games Twitter for political gain

HANNAH DREIER
Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)

— Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's approval ratings may be languishing below 30 percent, but on Twitter he's as popular as Pope Francis — or so it would seem.

The socialist South American leader regularly sets social media afire with support, with heavily trending anti-U.S. campaigns such as #ObamaYankeeGoHome and #ObamaRepealTheExecutiveOrder, which denounced U.S. sanctions on members of Maduro's administration.

But a closer look suggests that the government is artificially inflating its social media influence and distorting its popularity. Independent analysts who ran tests at the request of The Associated Press found the government was benefiting from networks of fake accounts.

Automated accounts known as bots are a worldwide phenomenon that Twitter has struggled to stop. Programmers create them in batches, and Twitter has to eliminate them one by one. At one point, Maduro complained that Twitter had shut down more than 6,000 accounts that followed him. The company declined comment for this story.

Among the other power-brokers who experts say routinely employ bot networks in violation of Twitter's policies are the leaders of Russia, Mexico and Turkey, as well as supporters of the Islamic State group.

Twitter has an obvious appeal to the government of Venezuela. The platform is

a crucial space for the exchange of independent information and views in a country where news outlets critical of the government are disappearing under what press freedom groups call a concerted campaign of sanctions and intimidation.

The hyper-polarized oil nation is obsessed with the social network. Venezuela consistently ranks among the countries most active on Twitter and uses the platform to discuss political news more than any other Latin American nation, according to the Pew Research Center.

"Twitter is one of the scarce windows for dissident options," said Carolina Acosta-Alzuru, a University of Georgia media studies scholar who hails from Venezuela. "It's another sphere where the government trying to control the discourse. That's what the whole game with hashtags is about — giving you a false sense of a majority."

In one way or another, the government appears to be succeeding.

While the opposition is polling twice as well as the ruling party, the top Twitter



Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro speaks in Caracas, Venezuela. Maduro has become the third most-retweeted public figure in the world, behind Pope Francis and the King of Saudi Arabia, according to public relations firm Burston Marsteller. But a closer look suggests that the government is artificially inflating its social media pull by using networks of fake accounts. (AP Photo/Ariana Cubillos)

ter trending topic in Venezuela is usually a government message, with oppo-

nents coming in a distant second. In 2011, Chavez drummed up support for

his newly launched Twitter account by pledging to reward his 4 millionth follower with a house, ultimately won by a college student. Today, the socialist party offers an app that allows people to automatically retweet every message posted by Maduro. He has become the third most-retweeted public figure in the world, behind Pope Francis and the King of Saudi Arabia, according to public relations firm Burston Marsteller.

Using a program written at the request of the Associated Press to test for bots, researchers at the Utah State University Data Science Lab found classic bot characteristics among hundreds of accounts that retweet government posts, including messages sent at impossibly fast typing speeds, repetitive content and tweets posted from different accounts within seconds of each other.

"We can conclude that there is a bot alliance," computer science professor Kyumin Lee said. "It's not that they just happened to repost the exact same content; this is not normal human behavior." □

Mexican resort of Acapulco sees rebound in killings

JOSE RIVERA
Associated Press

ACAPULCO, Mexico (AP)

— Four employees of a restaurant in the Mexican resort of Acapulco and a taxi driver were pulled from a taxi and shot to death Wednesday as the Pacific coast city suffers a resurgence of violence.

An Acapulco police detective who was not authorized to be quoted by name said the killings

occurred before dawn Wednesday.

The men had left work after the restaurant closed and were apparently heading home when they were attacked.

Acapulco is seeing a rebound in violence, which had calmed in 2014.

The city of about 800,000 saw 404 homicides in the first six months of this year, compared to 281 in the same period of 2014.

The murder rate still remains below the bloody peak of 524 murders in the first half of 2012.

Javier Morlet Macho, a community activist who sits on the citizens' police advisory board in Acapulco, said the rise in killings suggests a new gang may be carrying out "a clean-up operation" to eradicate rivals as it moves into the territory.

There was no immediate

indication the men killed Wednesday had anything to do with the gangs; they may have been targeted simply because they were on the streets at 2:00 a.m.. Morlet Macho said the killings were unusual, because gang killings in Acapulco "are normally very closely targeted against a particular individual ... but these men didn't have anything to do with it." □

Colombia police arrest dollar mule with \$38,500 in stomach

CESAR GARCIA
Associated Press

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP)

— Colombian police said Wednesday they arrested a woman at Bogota's airport after discovering she was smuggling \$38,500 in cash in small capsules hidden inside her body. The woman, described as a 39-year-old Colombian fashion designer, was arrested two days ago in the

capital's El Dorado airport after arriving on a flight from Mexico.

The woman was receiving medical treatment and so far had expelled 64 latex-covered capsules containing five \$100 bills each, General Gustavo Moreno, head of the customs police, told The Associated Press. Colombia supplies around 90 percent of the cocaine consumed in the

United States, so law enforcement agents in the country are permanently on the lookout for drug mules who swallow small capsules of cocaine. Finding people using the tactic to smuggle cash in excess of the \$10,000 legal limit is much rarer.

Nonetheless Moreno said it has become more frequent of late and he expects to capture more

people employing the technique because the strong U.S. dollar provides an incentive to criminals to repatriate profits from the illegal drug trade.

Most drug sales take place in dollars or euros so Colombian traffickers frequently look to repatriate their illegal profits and launder them through construction and other front businesses back home. A strong dol-

lar, which allows the drug money to go further once converted into pesos, serves as a strong magnet emboldening traffickers to take on such huge risks, experts say.

So far this year, cash seizures at Bogota's airport have quadrupled to about \$5 million as the greenback has risen almost 60 percent against the Colombian peso. □

Arrest made in case of slain Mexican journalist, 4 women

K. CORCORAN
A. ARCE

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP)

— One person was in police custody Wednesday in connection with the slaying of a Mexican photojournalist and four women in an apartment, Mexico City's top prosecutor said.

Prosecutor Rodolfo Rios Garza said Wednesday the person was identified through a fingerprint found in the apartment and that he had a criminal record. Ruben Espinosa, a photographer who had fled the Gulf Coast state of Veracruz fearing for his safety, was shot in the head Friday, his body bound and tortured. The attackers also killed his friend, Nadia Vera and two of her roommates — a 19-year-old aspiring makeup artist and a woman from Colombia — as well as their 40-year-old housekeeper.

No other information about the arrest was immediately released. Mexican investi-

gators have suggested the five may have been killed for any number of reasons,



Family and friends mourn during the funeral of murdered photojournalist Ruben Espinosa in Mexico City. One person was in police custody Wednesday in connection with the slaying of Espinosa and four women in an apartment, Mexico City's top prosecutor said. Espinosa, 31, worked for the investigative magazine Proceso and other media in Veracruz state.

(AP Photo/Sofia Jaramillo)

including robbery.

But friends say it's hard to believe Espinosa and Vera, an activist who had organized protests in Veracruz, would be tortured and killed because they simply were in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The photographer had moved to Mexico City from the coastal state of Vera-

cruz in June because he felt threatened because of his work. But even in the vast metropolis, he sensed he was being watched.

A man approached him in a restaurant to ask if he was the photographer who fled Veracruz, then another

stranger did the same at a party, according to friends in whom he confided.

The encounters fueled the fear that had prompted Espinosa to make a pact with a friend after moving to Mexico City in June: They would regularly check in with each other via calls and texts to let the other know everything was OK.

As of 2:13 p.m. Friday, everything was. That was the last time anyone heard from Espinosa.

Just 50 minutes later, a security camera recorded three men leaving Vera's apartment building. Hours later, a woman entered the apartment and found the bloody remains of a massacre.

Vera, who moved to Mexico City last year to work as a cultural promoter, had been active in organizing protests for various causes in Veracruz. Late last year, she had posted a video warning that if anything happened to her, it would be the fault of Gov. Javier

Duarte.

Espinosa, 31, grew up in Mexico City but had spent eight years working in Xalapa, the capital of Veracruz. He photographed political figures and university protests for the influential investigative magazine Proceso, and freelanced for other agencies. Friends say his work angered powerful people in Veracruz.

The Gulf Coast state, rich in coffee and oil, is an important route for migrants heading to the U.S., and cartels who use the port at Veracruz city to move drugs and other contraband. The government is known to be filled with strong-armed officials who have been accused of colluding with crime bosses.

It is a dangerous place to be a journalist. Since Duarte took office in 2010, 13 journalists from Veracruz have been killed and three more are missing, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, a U.S.-based advocacy group. □

Puerto Rico extends water restrictions as drought worsens

DANICA COTO
Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)

— A deepening drought in Puerto Rico that has affected 2.5 million people forced the government on Wednesday to extend severe water rationing measures to more communities that are already struggling with an economic crisis.

Another 180,000 customers will now receive water only every third day, raising the total facing 48-hour cuts in

service to 400,000, as the U.S. territory's main reservoirs continue to shrink, according to the island's water and sewer company.

"We have to keep the water that's available under control," said Alberto Lazaro, the company's executive director.

Nearly 13 percent of Puerto Rico is under an extreme drought and another 39 percent under a severe one, according to The National Drought Mitigation

Center.

July was the fourth driest month on record in San Juan since 1898, with only 1.60 inches (4 centimeters) of rain, said Carlos Anselmi, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service. So far this year, it has rained as much as 12 inches (31 centimeters) less than usual in San Juan, and as much as 20 inches (51 centimeters) less in some areas at the Carraizo reservoir, he said.

Forecasters blame the El Nino phenomenon, a warming of the tropical Pacific that affects global weather and has led to a quiet Atlantic hurricane season, which began in June and ends in November.

The lack of rain has forced some businesses in Puerto Rico to temporarily close, while others, such as motels, have reported a slight increase in customers.

The drought comes as

Puerto Rico is struggling through a nearly decade-long economic slump that has led authorities to raise sales taxes, even on bottled water.

Olga Rodriguez, a 62-year-old San Juan resident who lives with her elderly father, has received water only every third day for more than a month. She worries it will only worsen.

"May God help us all, because we need it," she said in a phone interview. □



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bassadors of Goodwill. The symbolic honorary titles are presented in the name of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guests who visit Aruba for 10-to-19 and 20-to-35 consecutive years.

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All the honorees are loyal members of the Divi Phoenix and they love Aruba very much because of the friendly people, the climate, beaches, restaurants and casinos.

They say Aruba feels like paradise and the people are like a family to them. The certificates were presented by Mr. Ernest Giel representing the Aruba Tourism Authority together with Ms. Pearl Lake and staff members of the Divi Phoenix Beach Resort. □

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MOOMBA BEACH - When you are a barbecue fan nothing will beat the BBQ Buffet at MooMba Beach on Friday and Sunday evenings. Starting at 6 pm the all you can eat extravaganza continues until 10, when the second Happy

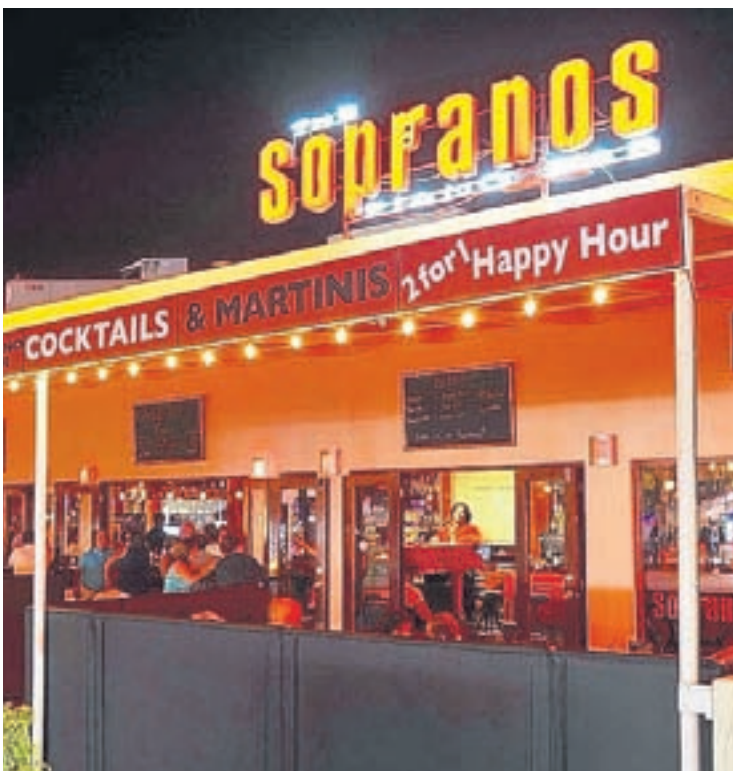
Hour of the days starts. Of course there is a live band to make the ultimate sensation of holiday BBQ-ing complete.

The Happy Hours at MooMba are from 6 - 7 pm and from 10 - 11, so you can catch various birds with

one stone. MooMba Beach is located between the Holiday Inn Resort and the Marriot Ocean Club. MooMba's dress code is 'bare feet in the sand'. For more information, please surf to www.moomba-beach.com. □

A TripAdvisor rating of 4.5...

A New Website for Sopranos Piano Bar in the Arawak Garden!



PALM BEACH - A new, attractive website will keep everyone up to speed about the goings-on at fabulous Sopranos Piano Bar in the Arawak Garden. On the site one can view the uploaded pho-

tos, the menu with its specials will be posted and there is a slide show with photos of events. Via the website there is access to the Sopranos Facebook site, making social interaction even more easily



accessible. Sopranos Piano Bar is one of Aruba's bars with an internationally known piano player, who can belt out

songs on request. The atmosphere is often more than a little bit lively, as is reflected in the 4.5 TripAdvisor rating that the popu-

lar bar received. The name of the new website is www.sopranopianobar.com; look it up! □

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Romantic Beachside Proposal for Anthony and Jasmin



PALM BEACH - On Tuesday, August 4th, long time vacationer Anthony D'Angelo proposed to Jasmin Vicente beachside. The two met in 2011 at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut. Being huge sport fans, Anthony a rugby player and Jasmin a softball player, had an instant attraction. People often think true love only exists in fairytales. Well this fairytale is a reality. Their love is unlike anything anyone has ever seen before. Aruba is truly one happy island! ☐

Family Ellis Honored at the Occidental Grand Aruba



PALM BEACH - Recently the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure of honoring a family of loyal and friendly Visitors of Aruba at the Occidental Grand Aruba Beach Resort as Distinguished Visitors.

The symbolic honorary title is presented in the name of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guests who visit Aruba for 10-to-19 consecutive years. The honorees were Mr.



Don and Mrs. Maria Ellis and their son Trevor Ellis. This nice family comes from Gahanna, Ohio, and they are loyal guests of the Occidental Grand Beach Resort. They love Aruba

very much because of the friendly people, the climate, beaches, restaurants and bars, and being on Aruba and staying at the Occidental is like being in paradise for them. The

certificates were presented by Mr. Ernest Giel representing the Aruba Tourism Authority together with a group of staff members of the Occidental Grand Aruba Beach Resort. □

Catch your own dinner with Driftwood!

Motto at Driftwood Restaurant: "from the pier to your plate!"



ORANJESTAD - The downtown marina is home of Driftwood Fishing Charters, the successful fisherman of the established seafood restaurant Driftwood in Oranjestad. Driftwood owner Herby

Merryweather has a love and passion for fishing. A fisherman who knows about fish, what our local waters have to offer, and what the words "fresh seafood" really mean. What Herby catches will be served in his restaurant on the same day. Herby loves to share his fishing passion with the many visitors to the island. His fleet of a 35ft. Twin Engine Bertram yacht and a 50ft. Twin Engine Post yacht, appropriately called "Driftwood I and II, is available for charters on 12 noon and from 1pm to 5pm.



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You can call Herby directly at (297) 592 4040 or go to www.driftwoodaruba.com

Driftwood Restaurant. This authentic Aruban seafood restaurant is located in characteristic downtown Oranjestad. Their

extended menu has been jubled by many. Driftwood offers daily specials, as well as a delicious 4-course menu for just \$25.95 **Charter deep sea fishing rates:** \$400 - 1/2 day • \$760 - full day. Rates per boat Max. 6 people. **Driftwood Restaurant** Authentic Aruban Seafood Restaurant; Klipstraat #12, Downtown Oranjestad. Tel: (297) 583 2515 www.driftwoodaruba.com Open hours: every day, from 5pm till 10:30pm. Sunday Closed.



In this July 16, 2015, file photo, Lance Armstrong speaks with reporters during a charity bike ride in Le Muret, France.
Associated Press

Government demanding Armstrong's medical records

JIM VERTUNO

AP Sports Writer

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — The federal government wants to see Lance Armstrong's medical records from his treatments for cancer, specifically whether his doctors knew back in 1996 that he was using performance-enhancing drugs. Court records show that government lawyers subpoenaed the Indiana University School of Medicine on July 30 to provide records of Armstrong's treatments and donations he later made to the school. The demand came in the government's lawsuit to recover millions of dollars in sponsorship money the U.S. Postal Service paid to Armstrong's teams from 1998-2004. Penalties could approach \$100 million. Armstrong's lawyers have asked a judge to block the subpoena. They called the release of records a violation of privacy and noted Armstrong confessed in 2013 to doping to win the Tour de France seven times. In a deposition given July 23, Armstrong admitted doping prior to 1996, his lawyers wrote.

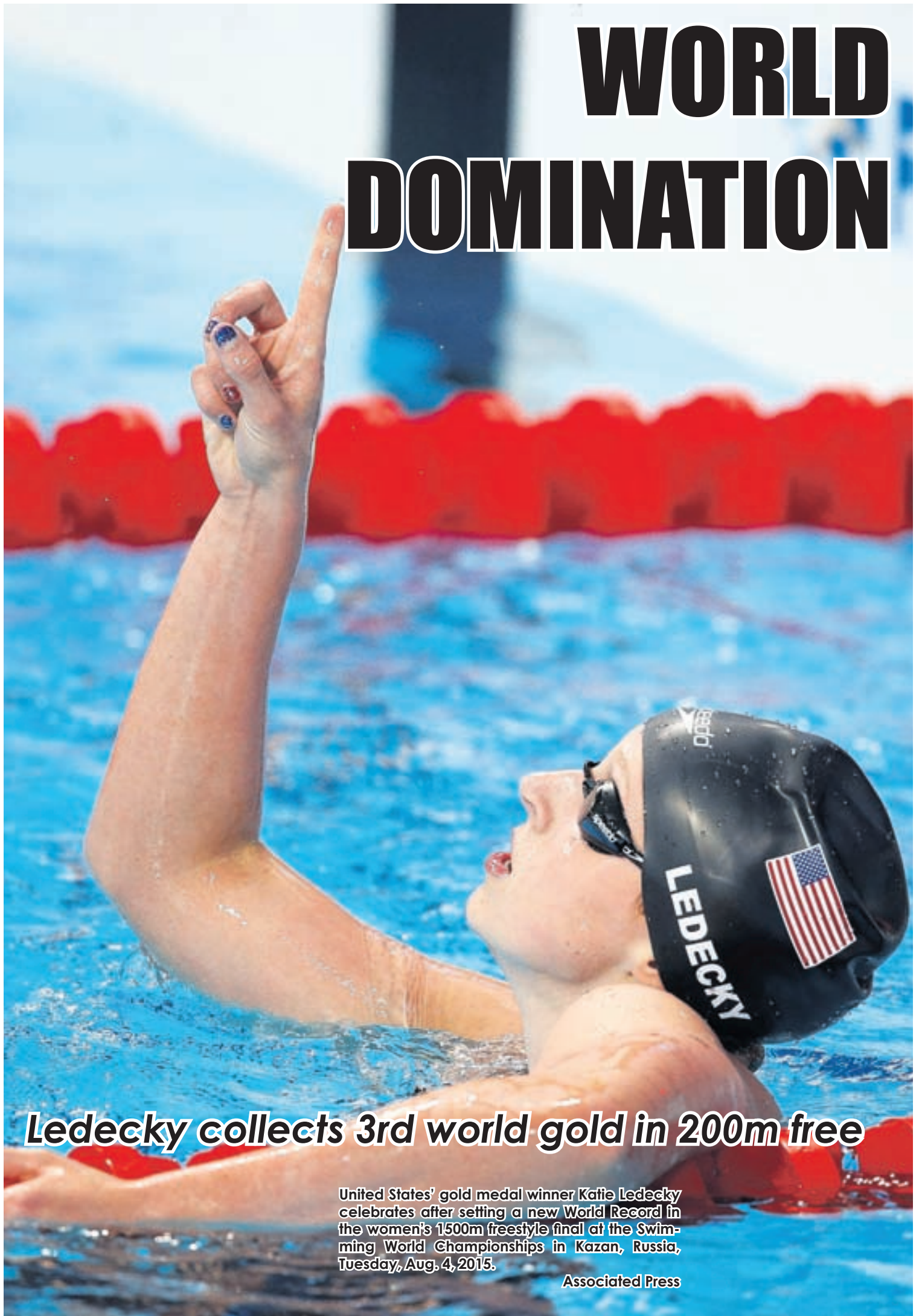
Continued on Page 22

WORLD DOMINATION

Ledecky collects 3rd world gold in 200m free

United States' gold medal winner Katie Ledecky celebrates after setting a new World Record in the women's 1500m freestyle final at the Swimming World Championships in Kazan, Russia, Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2015.

Associated Press



Brady testimony in NFL 'Deflategate' released

IMMY GOLEN

AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Tom Brady denied under oath to NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell that he tampered with footballs before the AFC title game, and investigator Ted Wells said in a transcript that he never warned the New England Patriots quarterback he would be punished if he didn't turn over his cell-phone. In a 457-page transcript released on Tuesday, Brady maintained his innocence in the NFL scandal known as "Deflategate." He denied discussing air level with the ballboys or even thinking about how inflated the footballs were when he selected them. He also said he's never asked anyone from the Patriots to tamper with footballs. Brady was suspended for four games and the team was docked \$1 million and two draft picks after an NFL-sanctioned investigation by Wells found the Patriots supplied improperly inflated footballs for the conference championship game against the Indianapolis Colts, which New England won 45-7.

Brady appealed the punishment. Goodell decided to hear the appeal himself and upheld the penalty. Both sides went to federal court, and U.S. District Judge Richard Berman told the sides to work out a settlement. To encourage them, he ordered Brady and Goodell to appear in court in person during the NFL preseason. The transcript filed by the NFL Players Association included the appeal testimony from Brady and Wells on June 23. Wells explained that he did not believe Brady had nothing to do with the ball deflation because the quarterback refused to provide all of the documents that were requested.

"In my almost 40 years of practice, I think that was one of the most ill-



New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady heads to the field for practice at an NFL football training camp Friday, July 31, 2015, in Foxborough, Mass.

Associated Press

advised decisions I have ever seen because it hurt how I viewed his credibility," Wells testified. "It hurt my assessment of his credibility for him to begin his interview by telling me he declined to give me the documents."

Wells' investigation found text messages between Brady and a pair of equipment managers — one of whom referred to himself as "the Deflator" — discussing

the preparation of footballs for the Jan. 18 game. The Patriots advanced to the Super Bowl and beat the Seattle Seahawks 28-24 for Brady's fourth NFL title.

Although Wells asked repeatedly for Brady's cell-phone, the investigator also testified: "I did not tell Mr. Brady at any time that he would be subject to punishment for not giving -- not turning over the documents.□

WNBA Roundup

Donovan becomes 1st female coach with 200 wins in WNBA

The Associated Press

UNCASVILLE, Connecticut (AP) — Connecticut Sun coach Anne Donovan became the first woman to record 200 victories in the WNBA when her team routed the San Antonio Stars 82-51 on Tuesday.

Donovan is the fourth coach in WNBA history to reach the milestone. The others are San Antonio's Dan Hughes, Van Chancellor and Mike Thibault. Donovan has coached five teams in more than a decade in the league. Kelsey Bone had 17 points, 10 rebounds and six assists to lead the Sun (10-9).

Connecticut also had a season-high 24 assists, led by Chelsea Gray's career-best seven.

SPARKS 83, LYNX 61

In Los Angeles, Candace Parker had 18 points, 13 rebounds, five assists and four steals as the Los Angeles Sparks beat the Minnesota Lynx 83-61 for their third straight win.

Jantel Lavender recorded her league-leading 11th double-double for Los Angeles with 14 points and 13 rebounds. Los Angeles had a season-high 12 steals.

PHOENIX 87, TULSA 84

In Phoenix, DeWanna Bonner scored 25 points,



In this Friday, Aug. 26, 2005 file photo, Natalia Molchanova of Russia reacts after she set a new world record, holding her breath underwater for 7 minutes and 16 seconds, at the first Individual World Freediving Championship in Pool, in Renens near Lausanne, Switzerland.

Associated Press

Underwater search ends for free diver Molchanova off Spain

HAROLD HECKLE

Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — Spain's rescue services called off their underwater search for missing free-diving great Natalia Molchanova on Wednesday after spending more than two days looking for her off the Balearic Islands.

The county's maritime rescue service and the po-

lice specialist underwater team both said they were limiting their operations to monitoring the Mediterranean Sea surface for any trace of the 53-year-old Russian.

AIDA, the international diving federation, said in a statement that Molchanova was diving on Sunday without fins at a depth of 30-40 meters (100-130 feet) off the coast of Formentera when she failed to resurface.

The alert was raised after 5 p.m. Sunday, and a specialist police underwater unit with five divers was deployed from the neighboring island of Ibiza within minutes.

A helicopter and a maritime rescue vessel were scrambled, and all shipping in the area was alerted.

The search continued until dusk Tuesday.

Maritime rescue coordinator Miguel Chicon said the operation was "very complicated" because Molchanova could have become trapped by weights she was wearing at the time of the dive.

A remote-controlled submersible robot hired by her family would continue an underwater search, police said.□

capped by a contested 3-pointer at the overtime buzzer, to lift the Mercury over the Tulsa Shock 87-84. Phoenix struggled to run a final play after a timeout with 23 seconds left and again after a timeout with 5.2 left before getting the ball to Bonner near mid-court. She started right, went left above the key before taking a dribble back to the right and shooting over Karima Christmas. Elena Delle Donne had 19 points, six rebounds, six assists and four blocks in just 23 minutes as the Chicago Sky defeated the Indiana Fever 106-82.□

American teen Ledecky wins 200 free at world swims

BETH HARRIS

AP Sports Writer

KAZAN, Russia (AP) — Katie Ledecky is unbeatable in the distance races. Turns out she's awfully good going shorter, too.

The 18-year-old American rallied to win the 200-meter freestyle at the world swimming championships Wednesday night, beating a stellar field that included defending champion Missy Franklin of the United States and two-time winner Federica Pellegrini of Italy. Ledecky had a good view of the competition from lane 7. Breathing to her right, she saw all but one of her rivals and halfway through she knew another gold medal was hers.

She rallied from fourth after the first two laps to touch first in 1 minute, 55.16 seconds for her second gold medal of the championships. She already won the 1,500 free, lowering her own world record in the preliminaries and final.

Pellegrini of Italy finished second in 1:55.32, and Franklin was third in 1:55.49. "I knew it was going to be a really competitive field and that was something that was really special for me," Ledecky said. "It was an honor to be in a heat like that."

Femke Heemskerk of the Netherlands took it out strongly, dipping under world-record pace on the opening lap. She was still in front through the third lap before fading to eighth. Franklin was second and Ledecky fourth halfway through the most anticipated women's race in Kazan. Ledecky moved up to second behind Heemskerk on the third lap while Franklin dropped to third.

"After racing with Katie for the last couple of years, I know her last 25 is always just ridiculous and that's how Katie is too," Franklin said. "I knew she was going to come back really strong."

Two years ago in Barcelona, Ledecky won four golds and set two world records. The recent high school graduate shows no



United States' gold medal winner Katie Ledecky is flanked by Italy's silver medal winner Federica Pellegrini, left, and United States' bronze medal winner Missy Franklin during the ceremony for the women's 200m freestyle final at the Swimming World Championships in Kazan, Russia, Wednesday, Aug. 5, 2015.

Associated Press

signs of slowing down in Kazan, where she still has the 400 and 800 freestyles remaining.

"I never really feel pressure," said Ledecky, who burst onto the world stage with a gold in the 800 free at the 2012 Olympics. "Going into London I didn't and since then I've just tried to maintain that same mentality."

Better known as a distance specialist, Ledecky was competing in the 200 free for the first time at the worlds.

"I had plenty of training to do all of these races and I knew that I could trust in my training," Ledecky said. "That confidence has fueled my swims this week." Ledecky's successes have been the lone bright spot for the U.S. team halfway through the meet in Kazan. Franklin picked up her second bronze medal, having helped the U.S. finish third in the 4x100 free relay Sunday. She was fifth in the 100

backstroke. She recently turned professional after swimming in college for two years, and has yet to regain the form that carried her to a record six gold medals two years ago at the worlds.

Sun Yang of China rallied to take the lead on the next-to-last lap and won the 800 free in 7:39.96 to go with his earlier victory in the 400 free.

Gregorio Paltrinieri of Italy finished second in 7:40.81 after leading for six laps until he was passed late by Sun, who earned his third consecutive world title.

Mack Horton of Australia, who led the first eight laps, settled for third at 7:44.02.

Laszlo Cseh of Hungary overtook Chad Le Clos to win the 200 butterfly as the oldest man in the final at age 29.

Cseh trailed Le Clos after the first two laps before passing the South African midway through the third lap. He hung on and

touched first in 1:53.48.

Defending champion Le Clos settled for silver in 1:53.68, and Jan Switkowski of Poland earned bronze in 1:54.10.

"I tried to take it out really hard. I wanted to see if I could scare them off the first 100 but it didn't work out," Le Clos said.

It was Cseh's first gold at the worlds since 2005 in Montreal, where he won the 400 individual medley. He has reunited with his childhood coach ahead of next year's Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

"I know I need to keep working on the race," Cseh said. "My last 20 was a little bit hard but it was an enjoyable race and I'm very happy."

Michael Phelps, the world-record holder, was forced to miss the world meet as part of his suspension by USA Swimming after a second drunk-driving arrest. He will be competing at U.S. nationals in Texas this week.

Adam Peaty of Britain earned his second individual gold medal with a victory in the 50 breaststroke, a non-Olympic event. He set the world record in the semifinals Tuesday and came back to win in 26.51. Cameron van der Burgh of South Africa finished second in 26.66. Kevin Cordes of the United States was third in 26.86.

Peaty and van der Burgh also finished 1-2 in the 100 breaststroke.

Vladimir Morozov of Russia, a gold-medal favorite in the 100 free, was disqualified for a false start after winning his semifinal heat. He sat on the lane line in shock at the announcement.

"When I jumped, I knew it was a false start," he said. "The really painful thing was that I gave it everything and got that kind of result, 48.1, pretty much a gold medal. I had the best chance over that distance." □

Tigers fall to Royals after GM Dombrowski's departure

The Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Salvador Perez homered and drove in three runs as the Kansas City Royals beat the Detroit Tigers 5-1 in Major League Baseball on Tuesday.

The game was overshadowed by an afternoon announcement that Dave Dombrowski was being replaced as Detroit's general manager by his top assistant, Al Avila. In 14 years with the Tigers, Dombrowski took one of the worst clubs in the game and took it to six postseason appearances including World Series losses in 2006 and 2012.

Detroit came into the season looking for a fifth straight AL Central division title, but now trail the Royals by 12 1/2 games.

Danny Duffy (5-5) allowed one run on five hits and four walks in seven innings, only striking out two.

Justin Verlander (1-4) struggled in his ninth start of the season, allowing five runs on 10 hits in seven innings.

INDIANS 2, ANGELS 0

ANAHEIM, California (AP) — Rookie Giovanny Urshela hit a two-run homer in the 12th inning after teammate Carlos Carrasco pitched one-hit ball through the first nine as Cleveland beat Los Angeles. Lonnie Chisenhall led off the 12th with a single against Jose Alvarez (2-3), who was working his third inning of relief. Cam Bedrosian replaced him and got two outs before Urshela — the Indians' No.9 hitter, drove a 1-0 pitch into the lower seats in the left field corner for his fourth homer after starting the road trip 1 for 20. Zach McAllister pitched one inning for the victory and Cody Allen got three outs for his 22nd save in 24 chances. Carrasco struck out seven, including Kole Calhoun with the potential winning run at second base to end the game. Last Thursday at Oakland, the 28-year-old right-hander from Venezuela pitched a two-hitter and retired his final 16 batters in a 3-1 victory.

RANGERS 4, ASTROS 3

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Relievers Sam Freeman and Shawn Tolleson



Kansas City Royals' Salvador Perez (13) is congratulated by teammate Eric Hosmer after they both scored on Perez's two-run home run off Detroit Tigers starting pitcher Justin Verlander during the fourth inning of a baseball game, Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2015, in Detroit.

Associated Press

Dombrowski out as Tigers' prez, GM; Avila takes over



In this Oct. 14, 2014, file photo, Detroit Tigers general manager Dave Dombrowski speaks to the media during a baseball news conference in Detroit.

Associated Press

NOAH TRISTER

AP Baseball Writer

DETROIT (AP) — The end of Dave Dombrowski's tenure in Detroit came suddenly and unexpectedly — like so many of the moves he made to build the Tigers into a powerhouse in Major League Baseball.

Dombrowski is out after nearly 14 seasons as president and general manager of the Tigers. The four-time champions of the American League's Central Division announced the move

Tuesday, catching people in Detroit and beyond by surprise. Dombrowski was fresh off making several big trades last week, and his exit set off rampant speculation about where he would next work.

Dombrowski was in the last season of his contract and overseeing a struggling team, so there was already speculation about whether he'd be back in 2016. But his abrupt exit — accompanied by a somewhat cryptic explanation from

the team — was unusual. He is being replaced by Al Avila, who has served as his top assistant since 2002. Avila's son, Alex, catches for the Tigers. "I've decided to release Dave from his contract in order to afford him the time to pursue other career opportunities," owner Mike Ilitch said in a statement. "I feel this is the right time for the Tigers to move forward under new leadership." About an hour after announcing Dombrowski's departure, the Tigers introduced Avila as their new general manager at a news conference. Avila said Ilitch hired him Saturday, a day after Dombrowski completed the last of his trade-deadline deals. Detroit has won four consecutive division titles, a streak that seems almost certain to end this year. The Tigers lost Tuesday to fall 12 1/2 games behind the first-place Royals.

Dombrowski's last major act at the helm in Detroit was to trade away some of the team's top players with an eye toward the future. □

pitched out of trouble and Texas held off Houston.

Freeman relieved Yovani Gallardo (8-9) in the sixth inning, and allowed a single and a walk to load the bases with one out. Freeman then retired Luis Valbuena and Marwin Gonzalez. Tolleson earned his 20th save, all since May 20, despite giving up a walk and Valbuena's second single before recording an out. Jason Castro and Jose Altuve struck out for the final two outs. Texas erased a 2-1 deficit with three runs in the fifth against Dan Straily (0-1). Houston's Carlos Gomez drove in two runs with a double and a homer.

ATHLETICS 5, ORIOLES 0

OAKLAND, California (AP) — Marcus Semien hit a three-run homer in the sixth inning to help Chris Bassitt earn his first win this season as Oakland topped Baltimore. Brett Lawrie added an RBI triple and Eric Sogard scored twice as Oakland won for only the third time in 12 games.

Bassitt (1-4) gave up five hits and had a season-high seven strikeouts over seven innings. The 25-year-old rookie's only other big league win came Sept. 22, 2014 against Toronto while he was with the Chicago White Sox. Francisco Rodriguez pitched the eighth and Fernando Abad worked the ninth to complete Oakland's AL-leading 14th shutout.

Jonathan Schoop had two hits for Baltimore. The Orioles dropped into third place in the AL East division, 6 1-2 games behind the New York Yankees.

BLUE JAYS 3, TWINS 1

TORONTO (AP) — Josh Donaldson and Troy Tulowitzki hit solo home runs, Marco Estrada pitched 6-plus innings to win consecutive starts and Toronto beat Minnesota.

In other AL games it was N.Y. Yankees 13, Boston 3; Toronto 3, Minnesota 1; Kansas City 5, Detroit 1; Texas 4, Houston 3; Tampa Bay 11, Chicago White Sox 3; Seattle 10, Colorado 4; Oakland 5, Baltimore 0; and Cleveland 2, L.A. Angels 0, 12 innings. □

Column: Keep the \$74.95 and pass on this Mayweather fight

TIM DAHLBERG

AP Sports Columnist

LAS VEGAS (AP) — So, this is it for Floyd Mayweather Jr., or so they say.

Step up now because it's your last chance to see Money May in the ring. Buy those ringside tickets or find 75 bucks somewhere that you didn't spend on Ronda Rousey to watch Mayweather and Andre Berto dance about from the comfort of your own living room.

The fighter who has made himself insanely rich by conning people into paying to watch him on TV is at it again. The promise this time is that it's his last time, or at least until Mayweather figures there are still enough rubes out there who will buy another one next spring.

It wasn't enough to pocket \$220 million for a fight against Manny Pacquiao that could never live up to the hype that preceded it. Mayweather has jets to fuel and cars to buy and, really, who couldn't use another \$30 million or so?

This could have been a fight on free TV, something of a payback for those who felt shortchanged for the \$100 they paid to watch the snoozer against a surprisingly passive Pacquiao. This should have been a fight on free TV, but there's a few extra million to be squeezed out on pay-per-view and once again greed got in the way.

At least those buying the Pacquiao fight had an excuse. They thought Pacquiao legitimately had a chance, ignoring the fact that his skills had deteriorated badly in the five years he had been chasing a

fight with Mayweather.

There's no pretending that Berto is much of a challenge. He has lost three of his last six fights, two of them to fighters that Mayweather easily beat. About the best thing anyone in the promotion can say about Berto is that he's aggressive, and may actually try to hit Mayweather.

That was reflected at the Westgate LV sports book on Wednesday, where Mayweather was a staggering 40-1 favorite. Not one bet had been placed, even with the chance to reap a small fortune should Berto somehow find a way to win.

That's all on Mayweather. He hand picks his opponents, and for this fight he passed over England's Amir Khan and Keith Thurman, among others who might actually give him a fight. For a fighter who believes he is the best ever, it's an odd and anti-climactic way to end a career, assuming that career is actually ending.

Still, there might be reasons to buy this pay-per-view. This is boxing, after all, a sport where the bizarre sometimes seems normal. Such as:

—Mayweather forgets to tie the laces on his boxing shoes and trips while walking into the ring, hitting his head on Justin Bieber's microphone. By the time he can think clearly again, Berto is celebrating a first-round knockout and wondering if Mayweather can make him a deal on a used Bugatti.

—Mayweather's usual pedicurist calls in sick the morning of the fight, and the replacement digs a bit

too deeply into his big toe. Mayweather tries to stick and move, but is so hobbled that he can't run at all. Berto wins a unanimous decision, then pops Bieber in the nose just for good measure.

—Fed up with watching bad fights from the corner, Floyd Sr. urges his son to trade punches with Berto no matter what happens. "Forget what I said about people not knowing anything about boxing," he tells him. "You need to give them a good show at least once."

OK, so maybe there really isn't a way for Berto to win. Maybe boxing fans should just treat this for what it is — a glorified exhibition that will make Mayweather even more millions while completing his six-fight deal with Showtime and making him a free agent should he decide — as most assume he will — to fight on at some point.

It will also put him in the conversation with Rocky Marciano, the heavyweight champion who retired at 49-0 in 1956. That's something that matters to Mayweather, if only because he truly believes — and the sycophants around him keep telling him — that he's the greatest fighter ever.

That's preposterous on a number of levels, but let Mayweather believe what he wants. He's earned that right, winning every one of his 48 fights since turning pro 19 years ago.

Boxing fans, though, have a few rights of their own. And on Sept. 12 they'd be wise to exercise them by resisting the urge to reach into their wallets to watch this stinker of a fight. □



In this May 2, 2015, file photo, boxer Floyd Mayweather Jr., celebrates his unanimous decision victory over Manny Pacquiao, from the Philippines, after their welterweight title fight in Las Vegas.

Associated Press

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MON-THURS 6:55 | 9:25
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SUN & HOL 6:55 | 9:25

Shaun the Sheep MOVIE
MON-FRI 5:00 | 7:05
SAT, SUN & HOL 2:55 | 5:00 | 7:05

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ON TWO SCREENS
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES
MON-THURS 3:40 | 5:10 | 6:30 | 8:00 | 9:25
FRI 3:40 | 5:10 | 6:30 | 8:00 | 9:25 | 10:50
SAT 2:20 | 3:40 | 5:10 | 6:30 | 8:00 | 9:25 | 10:50
SUN & HOL 2:20 | 3:40 | 5:10 | 6:30 | 8:00 | 9:25

minions
MON-FRI 4:45
SAT, SUN & HOL 2:15 | 4:45

TRAINWRECK
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES
MON-THURS 9:15
FRI 9:15 | 12:00
SAT 9:15 | 12:00
SUN & HOL 9:15

ANT-MAN
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES
MON-THURS 4:20 | 6:45 | 9:15
FRI 4:20 | 6:45 | 9:15 | 11:45
SAT 1:55 | 4:20 | 6:45 | 9:15 | 11:45
SUN & HOL 1:55 | 4:20 | 6:45 | 9:15

PIXELS
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES
MON-THURS 4:20 | 6:40 | 9:00
FRI 4:20 | 6:40 | 9:00 | 11:20
SAT 2:00 | 4:20 | 6:40 | 9:00 | 11:20
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Isner hits 17 aces in straight-set win over Estrella Burgos

HOWARD FENDRICH

AP Tennis Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — If all else fails, John Isner knows he can count on his serve to help him out, especially on hard courts. The 6-foot-10 American hit 17 aces and won 37 of 40 first-serve points Wednesday to move into the third round of the Citi Open by beating Victor Estrella Burgos of the Dominican Republic 6-3, 7-6 (5). Isner, seeded eighth at the hard-court tuneup for the U.S. Open, never faced a break point, powering serves that regularly topped 130 mph. The American compiled a 26-9 edge in winners.

The runner-up in Washington in 2007 and 2013, Isner had his left leg massaged by a trainer late in the second set, then was two points from being pushed to a third when the 51st-ranked Estrella Burgos took a 5-4 lead in the tiebreaker. But Isner took the final three points — delivering

a 139 mph service winner and a 125 mph ace, then watching as Estrella Burgos pushed a forehand wide on match point.

Over and over, Isner would smack a high-bouncing serve that rose out of reach for the 5-8 Estrella Burgos.

Trailing 5-4 but on serve in the second set, Isner fell behind love-15 by dumping a forehand into the net. That put Estrella Burgos three points from taking the set. How did Isner respond? By reeling off the next four points with the help of serves at 131, 134, 126 and 122 mph. Isner is coming off his third consecutive title in Atlanta, also on hard courts. He received a first-round bye at the Citi Open and now will face 12th-seeded Vasek Pospisil of Canada, who lost in last year's final.

Top-seeded Andy Murray was scheduled to face Teymuraz Gabashvili at night. It's two-time major champion Murray's first appear-



John Isner, of the United States, returns the ball to Victor Estrella Burgos, of the Dominican Republic, at the Citi Open tennis tournament, Wednesday, Aug. 5, 2015, in Washington.

Associated Press

ance in Washington since 2006. In other matches Wednesday, Feliciano Lopez ended Lleyton Hewitt's last appearance at the Citi Open with a 4-6, 7-5, 6-3 second-round victory over the two-time major champion. The seventh-seeded Lopez wound up with a 44-23 edge in winners, including 15 aces, in the 2-hour, 10-minute match.

Lopez lost his first four career matches against Hewitt but now has won the past two. Hewitt is a

former No. 1 player who has said he will retire after January's Australian Open and received a wild-card entry into Washington's hard-court tuneup for the U.S. Open.

Next for Lopez is a match against Sam Groth, who eliminated ninth-seeded Viktor Troicki 6-3, 6-4. Unseeded American Steve Johnson defeated 11th-seeded Bernard Tomic 6-7 (7), 6-4, 6-2.

In women's action, second-seeded Sam Stosur,

the 2011 U.S. Open champion, defeated Irina Falconi 6-1, 7-5. Fifth-seeded Alize Cornet lost to 128th-ranked American wild-card entry Louisa Chirico 7-5, 4-6, 7-6 (4) in a match that lasted 3 hours — filled with what Chirico called "long rallies; physical rallies."

The 19-year-old Chirico was 0-5 in main-draw tour-level matches before winning twice this week, including against 55th-ranked Heather Watson in the first round.

□

Armstrong's

Continued from Page 17

"Those documents are irrelevant to the subject matter of this litigation and the request is nothing more than an attempt to harass Armstrong, cause unnecessary delay, and needlessly increase the cost of this litigation," Armstrong's lawyers wrote.

The demand for medical records came in a late flurry of government subpoenas for documents and depositions as the case nears the end of the evidence-gathering phase. The government also issued subpoenas last week for testimony from Armstrong's former sponsors Nike Inc., Trek Bicycle Corp., GiroSport Design and Discovery Communications Inc., which took over sponsorship of Armstrong's team in 2005.

Those subpoenas don't

name specific company officials, but allow them to choose a "person most knowledgeable" to discuss sponsorship deals and whether the company had any prior awareness of Armstrong's doping.

The whistleblower lawsuit was initially filed by former teammate Floyd Landis and was joined by the federal government in 2013. The case is not expected to go to trial before 2016. While Armstrong has confessed to doping since before 1996,

the push for medical records and what Armstrong told his doctors could be an attempt to further establish an intricate conspiracy to hide his cheating from federal sponsors.

After his initial diagnosis in 1996, Armstrong sought help at Indiana University, where Dr. Lawrence Einhorn had developed advanced treatments for the kind of testicular cancer that



In this May 11, 2012, file photo, cycling legend and cancer survivor Lance Armstrong attends a rally at a news conference at Children's Hospital in Los Angeles in favor of Proposition 29, a measure on the June 2012 California primary election ballot that would add a \$1-per-pack tax on cigarettes.

Associated Press

had spread to Armstrong's brain.

Betsy Andreu, the wife of Armstrong's former teammate Frankie Andreu, testified in a 2005 arbitration case that she was in a hospital room with Armstrong and others when she heard the cyclist tell doctors had

had taken steroids and a blood booster.

Armstrong strongly denied the conversation took place, but Andreu's claim was one of the key allegations of doping that swirled around Armstrong for years. She repeated the claim a sworn statement to

the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency for its 2012 investigation that exposed Armstrong's doping and led to him being stripped of his Tour de France victories.

In the motion to quash the subpoena, Armstrong's lawyers wrote that he was recovering from brain surgery and now "does not recall" the conversation. But others who were in the room — Frankie Andreu and Stephanie McIlvain, a representative of former Armstrong sponsor Oakley — have already been deposed.

Betsy Andreu insisted Wednesday she has always told the truth. The records, if allowed to be released to the government, should prove that, she said. "My story has never changed. His has," Andreu said. "Who can you believe?"

An Indiana University spokesman did not immediately return a message seeking comment. □

You still use a landline? FCC voting on new phone rules

TALI ARBEL

AP Business Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The copper network behind landline phones, a communications mainstay for more than a century, is going away, as cable and fiber-optics lines come along with faster Internet speeds.

But the alternatives have drawbacks, including an inability to withstand power outages. The federal government is considering rules Thursday to make sure Americans aren't caught off guard in emergencies if they switch.

Many people already scoff at the idea of a landline. About 45 percent of U.S. households just use cell-phones. But outside of cities, cell service can be poor.

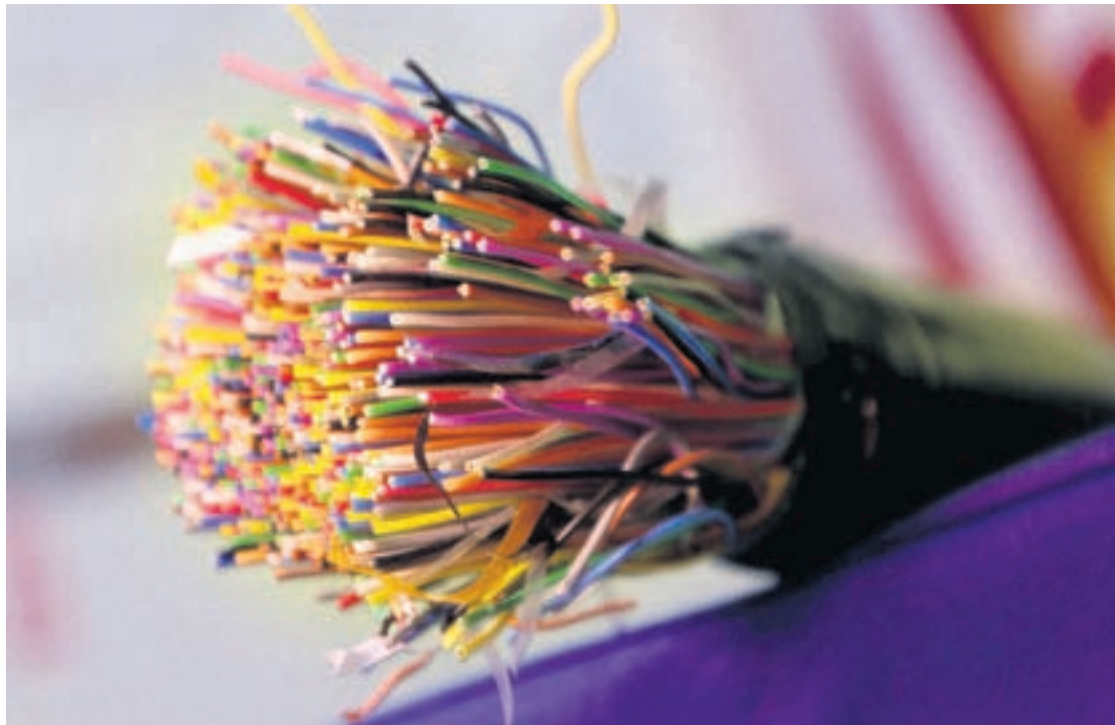
Yet even among households with wired phone service, according to a government study last year, about half of them have already ditched copper-based landlines for an Internet-based phone service sold by phone and cable companies and typically packaged with TV and Internet services. That's expected to continue.

Fiber and cable networks come with big benefits, such as faster Internet service and expected improvements in 911, including the ability to send texts and photos. Verizon also says fiber lasts longer than copper and doesn't need as much maintenance.

But a home phone that relies on the Internet will go out when the power does. With copper networks, the phone line delivers its own power source and will continue to work — as long as the phone isn't a cordless one needing separate power.

In addition, many home burglar alarms and medical alert systems run on the copper network, so people need time to get replacements.

"One of the concerns we all have is people don't understand the difference in these kinds of phone service. They see a phone is



This July 9, 2015 file photo shows a bundle of insulated copper telephone cables during a news conference on copper and metal theft, at the Arkansas state Capitol in Little Rock, Ark.

Associated Press

a phone is a phone," said Mimi Pickering, a documentary filmmaker in rural Whitesburg, Kentucky. She fought unsuccessfully against her state's recent decision to drop requirements that phone companies provide old-fashioned phone service to all homes. Instead, they can now offer a wireless or Internet-based service instead.

The march away from copper appears inevitable. "There will be so few people on the network that it won't be economical to maintain it," said Jon Banks, a senior vice president at United States Telecom Association, which represents Verizon, AT&T and other phone companies. "When copper wears out, nobody really wants to replace it with more copper."

On Thursday, the Federal Communications Commission is expected to require that phone companies warn residential customers three months before they abandon a copper network. For businesses, six months' notice would be required.

Phone and cable companies would also have to warn customers with newer technologies that the phone will go out with the power, so people have time to get replacement alarms and backup batteries if necessary.

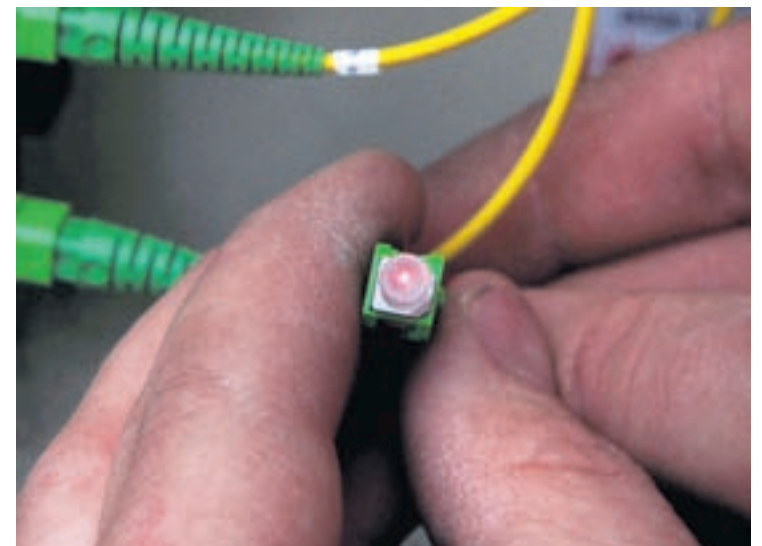
"If you mess with people's

phone systems without explaining what's going on, you have real issues," said Harold Feld, senior vice president at the public-interest group Public Knowledge. "People's lives depend on it."

He estimates that about 80 million people as well as several million small businesses still have traditional copper-based phone service. Some customers, consumer advocates and the telephone-workers union accuse the phone companies of not repairing copper networks that they want to shut down. The new rules would prohibit companies from retiring a copper network through neglect. If it wants to abandon copper, it would need to tell customers.

In FCC filings, Verizon says that retirement-by-neglect is a myth, while CenturyLink

says it spends billions of dollars to maintain its copper network and doesn't see the need for this rule.



In this March 13, 2009 file photo, Tyson Hoffman, a Verizon service technician, checks a cable as he connects it to the Verizon FiOS fiber network in Rockville, Md.

Associated Press

Consumer advocates have particular concerns about remote areas. They worry that copper will be

replaced there with wireless services that don't do as much.

They point to what happened on the western part of New York's Fire Island after Superstorm Sandy destroyed a lot of the copper wiring there in 2012. Verizon wanted to replace it with a home phone service called Voice Link, which relies on the cellular network but is not a cellphone. But, unlike copper, Voice Link couldn't be used for Internet service and didn't work with faxes or credit-card machines used by small businesses.

After complaints, Verizon said it would also build a fiber network.

But some people, even in big cities, just want to keep their copper phone line.

"I'm on the 40th floor of an elevator building," said Lynn Caporale, 57, who

lives in New York. In a power failure, "I would have no elevator, no lights, no running water," she said. □

Reddit updates content policy, banning a 'handful' of groups

NEW YORK (AP) — Reddit, the online discussion site known for free-wheeling discussions, is updating its content policy as it tries to be a more welcoming place for everyone.

Co-founder and CEO Steve Huffman posted on the site Wednesday that the goal is to consolidate the "vari-

ous rules and policies that have accumulated over the years into a single set of guidelines."

He says illegal content, inciting violence and "involuntary pornography" are still banned.

So what's new? A community can now be quarantined — so that only

people who choose to see its content can see it. Huffman says groups will be quarantined if they would be "extremely offensive" to the average Redditor.

He says Reddit is also banning communities that exist solely to annoy others, and "generally make Reddit worse for everyone else." □

Solid earnings news lifts Wall Street

MATHEW CRAFT
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The latest batch of corporate results helped nudge the stock market to a slight gain Wednesday, snapping a three-day slump. Another drop in oil prices held indexes back.

First Solar soared 17 percent, the biggest gain in the S&P 500, following news that the country's largest solar company turned in results that beat estimates and also raised its outlook for full-year profits. First Solar's stock jumped \$7.42 to \$51.92.

Better corporate earnings have helped support the stock market over the past month. Heading into the second-quarter earnings season last month, investors were braced for

2,099.84.

The Dow Jones industrial average lost 10.22 points, or 0.1 percent, to 17,540.47, while the Nasdaq composite rose 34.40 points, or 0.7 percent, to 5,139.94.

The market has looked listless in recent weeks as investors have traded one set of concerns for another. Worries about Greece have faded, said Burt White, the chief investment officer at LPL Financial. But concerns about China's economy and the Federal Reserve's next interest-rate increase remain. "I don't think the economy has a confidence problem," White said. "I think investors are having a confidence issue here."

Among other companies reporting quarterly results, Walt Disney dropped 9

In Europe, an encouraging economic survey along with improving corporate earnings helped push major markets up. Germany's DAX surged 1.6 percent, France's CAC 40 gained 1.7 percent, and Britain's FTSE 100 added 1 percent. In China, the Shanghai Composite Index slid 1.6 percent, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng gained 0.5 percent. Japan's Nikkei 225 rose 0.5 percent, South Korea's Kospi added 0.1 percent, while Australia's S&P/ASX 200 dropped 0.4 percent.

Back in the U.S., government bond prices fell, sending the yield on the 10-year Treasury note up to 2.27 percent from 2.22 percent.

Most precious and industrial metals finished with



Amplify Snack Brands CEO and President Thomas Ennis, center, is applauded as he rings the New York Stock Exchange opening bell to celebrate his company's IPO, Wednesday, Aug. 5, 2015. Amplify's brands include SkinnyPop popcorn and Paqui tortilla chips.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

a sharp drop in profits. But now, with the bulk of results turned in, earnings are on track to slip just 0.2 percent, according to S&P Capital IQ.

"The expectations were that things would be terrible," said Brad McMillan, the chief investment officer for the Commonwealth Financial Network. "And while they're not great, they're certainly better than expected."

The Standard & Poor's 500 index gained 6.52 points, or 0.3 percent, to close at

percent, weighing on the Dow, after posting sales that fell short of estimates. The company also said a decrease in subscribers to ESPN could hamper its profit in the coming years. Disney's stock lost \$11.16 to \$110.53.

Priceline Group climbed 5 percent after the online-booking service posted profit and revenue that easily beat analysts' forecasts, helped by rising reservations for hotel rooms and rental cars. Its stock gained \$67.22 to \$1,351.21.

losses. Gold lost \$5.10 to settle at \$1,085.60 an ounce while silver was flat at \$14.55 an ounce. Copper lost a penny to \$2.35 a pound. The price of oil turned lower after the Energy Department reported an increase in gasoline inventories. U.S. crude fell 59 cents to close at \$45.15 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange, hitting its lowest price since March. Brent crude, an international benchmark, fell 40 cents to close at \$49.59 in London. □

Wall Street Market Movers: Who are the heavyweights?

STEVE ROTHWELL
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — At \$660 billion, Apple is the stock market's heavyweight.

Like a handful of other "big cap" companies such as Microsoft and Exxon Mobil, the iPhone maker's market value means that when its shares move, so can the market. And these are the companies that influence your stock portfolio. "The combination of Apple's size and price moves, results in an enormous impact on indices," says Howard Silverblatt, a senior index analyst for S&P Dow Jones Indices. Lately, Apple's influence has been a drag.

Since closing at a record \$133 on February 23, Apple has slumped to \$116.53, wiping more than \$120 billion off the value of its stock. Between then and Tuesday's close, the Standard & Poor's 500, the most widely-tracked stock index, was down 0.8 percent.

Without Apple, the decline would have been 0.2 percent, according to S&P Dow Jones Indices, the company behind the S&P 500 index and the Dow Jones industrial average.

Of course the opposite is also true, when Apple's shares rise, the market can get a lift.

The impact of the technology giant is so big that S&P Dow Jones Indices has created a technology index that excludes Apple.

That allows investors to separate what's going on with tech stocks from what's going on with Apple because, while they're similar, the two might not be the same.

For example, the S&P 500 information technology sector is down 2.3 percent since Apple's record close. Take out Apple and the group has actually gained 0.7 percent.

History suggests that companies as dominant as Apple don't tend to stay

top dog for long. Competitors emerge, new products roll out, and growth can slow.

Exxon Mobil, which Apple surpassed to become the biggest publicly-traded company in August 2011, has slumped over the last year along with the price of oil. To be sure, Exxon Mobil is still big, with a market value of \$323 billion, but it has slipped to third in the ranking of S&P heavyweights, behind Microsoft.

In the early 1980s, computer company IBM was the stock market's big gun. Personal computers were still a new concept and IBM was one of the industry's dominant players. At the end of 1985, the company's stock made up 6.4 percent of the S&P 500's total value, much bigger than Apple's current 3.6 percent. Since then, the company has had to grapple with fierce competition from more nimble rivals. Like Exxon, Big Blue is still powerful, but it now ranks as the 28th largest in the S&P 500, making up 0.8 percent of the index.

Below are the five biggest companies in the S&P 500, ranked by market capitalization, which is determined by shares outstanding multiplied by stock price.

— APPLE

Market Value: \$660 billion
Weight in S&P: 3.6 percent.

— MICROSOFT

Market Value: \$381 billion.
Weight in S&P: 2.1 percent.

— EXXON MOBIL

Market Value: \$323 billion
Weight in S&P: 1.7 percent.

— WELLS FARGO

Market Value: \$297 billion
Weight in S&P: 1.5 percent

— JOHNSON & JOHNSON

Market Value: \$279 billion.
Weight in S&P: 1.5 percent.

— GENERAL ELECTRIC:

Market Value: \$264 billion.
Weight in S&P: 1.4 percent. □

Fiat Chrysler US earnings fall 3% over recall fines

DETROIT (AP) — Net income at Fiat Chrysler's U.S. operations fell 3 percent last quarter due largely to a \$90 million charge to pay government penalties for mishandling recalls.

The company says it made \$598 million from April to June, compared with \$619 million a year ago. The decline also included a \$71 million loss from paying off \$2.9 billion in secured notes.

The drop came even though worldwide sales rose 5 percent to 762,000 for the quarter, including a 6 percent increase in U.S. retail sales to individual buyers.

Revenue for the quarter rose nearly 11 percent to \$22.6 billion, mainly because of higher global sales and prices.

Chief Financial Officer Richard Palmer said the Jeep brand had its best quarter ever with global sales up 47 percent from a year ago to 316,000. Jeep, which sells only SUVs, is benefiting from the global popularity of the higher-sitting vehicles in the past year.

The quarter's pretax profit margin for the unit, known as FCA US LLC, were 6 percent, up from 4.8 percent a year ago. Last week the parent company, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV, reported that its North American pretax margin had hit 7.7 percent. Palmer said the FCA margins were lower because they included lower-profit international sales and because of the difference between U.S. and international accounting standards. Profit margins are the percentage of revenue that a company gets to keep.

The recall charge came from a consent agreement announced last month with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The company was assessed a record \$105 million penalty for recall problems including delays in notifying customers, distributing parts and telling NHTSA of problems. □

SEC:

Companies must reveal CEO-vs-worker pay gap

MARCY GORDON
AP Business Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal regulators have ap-

ceived more than 280,000 comments on the issue since it floated the proposal two years ago, and lob-

and nudge company directors as watchdogs to push back on executives' excess, supporters of dis-

— those with less than \$75 million in total shares held externally or less than \$50 million in annual revenue — are exempt from the disclosure. So are emerging growth companies and investment companies. Companies can exclude from the median pay calculations up to 5 percent of their employees outside the U.S.

"These are good and reasonable changes that should reduce costs for many companies" while still meeting the financial overhaul law's mandate, SEC Chair Mary Jo White said before the vote.

Business groups have argued that the pay information will be costly and time-consuming for companies. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce maintains it will cost U.S. companies more than \$700 million a year, compared with the SEC's estimate of about \$73 million.

Daniel Gallagher, one of the two Republicans voting against the action, called it "a nakedly political rule" serving no purpose other than "naming and shaming" CEOs. He suggested the rule may violate the Constitution.

Reaction from the business community and conservative Republican lawmakers was swift and sharply negative.

"At best, pay ratio is a misleading, politically-inspired, and costly disclosure that fails to provide investors with useful, comparable data," the Chamber of Commerce said in a statement. □



This photo shows the seal of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission at SEC headquarters, in Washington. The Securities and Exchange Commission on Wednesday, Aug. 5, 2015 voted to order most public companies to disclose the ratio between their chief executives' annual compensation and median, or midpoint, employee pay. The new rule will take effect starting in 2017.
(AP Photo/Andrew Harnik)

proved a long-delayed rule requiring companies to reveal the pay gap between CEOs and their employees.

The Securities and Exchange Commission voted Wednesday to order most public companies to disclose the ratio between their chief executives' annual compensation and median, or midpoint, employee pay.

The 3-2 vote, with the two Republican commissioners dissenting, culminated years of heated public debate over one of the most controversial rules the agency has put forward in recent years. The SEC re-

bying by business interests against the requirement was intense.

The SEC acted under a mandate from the 2010 law that reshaped regulation after the financial crisis. Outsize pay packages — often tied to the company's stock price — were blamed for encouraging disastrous risk-taking and short-term gain at the expense of long-term performance.

Public reporting of the gap is unlikely to result in a rush to cut executives' pay packages or boost employee salaries. The numbers could pack a symbolic punch, though,

closure say. The information also could be useful to shareholders casting advisory votes on executives' pay packages, which they've been entitled to do since 2011.

Companies will be required to report the ratio in their annual financial reports for their first fiscal year starting on or after Jan. 1, 2017.

Taking into account objections by business groups, the SEC built some flexibility and exceptions into the ratio requirement.

For example, companies can use estimates or sampling to determine the median employee pay.

Smaller public companies

UniCredit bank profits jump amid Italian recovery

MILAN (AP) — Italian bank UniCredit says its second-quarter profit jumped 30 percent as provisions for bad loans dropped amid a recovery in Italy's economy.

UniCredit reported net profit of 522 million euros (\$568 million) for the three months ended June 30 against 403 million euros in the same period of 2014. Revenue was flat at 5.7 bil-

lion euros.

CEO Federico Ghizzoni called the first-half profit, which exceeded 1 billion euros, "an excellent result" in an unfavorable banking environment with interest rates at historic lows.

Ghizzoni also announced the biggest management shuffle since he took over the bank five years ago, with the departure of general manager Ro-

berto Nicastro, who has been key in refocusing the group's business and developing digital banking. UniCredit cited "a respectful divergence of opinions" on strategy and organization.

Ghizzoni told analysts that Nicastro's resignation, effective Oct. 1, will allow a simplification of the managerial organization.

The bank said the percent-

age of impaired loans fell 9 percent to 913 billion euros. Meanwhile, the bank's Tier 1 ratio, a key measure of financial health, rose to 10.4 percent.

The results "confirm the validity of our strategy and our continuous de-risking effort," Ghizzoni told analysts.

Shares in UniCredit SpA were up 5.7 percent to 6.32 euros. □

Mutts



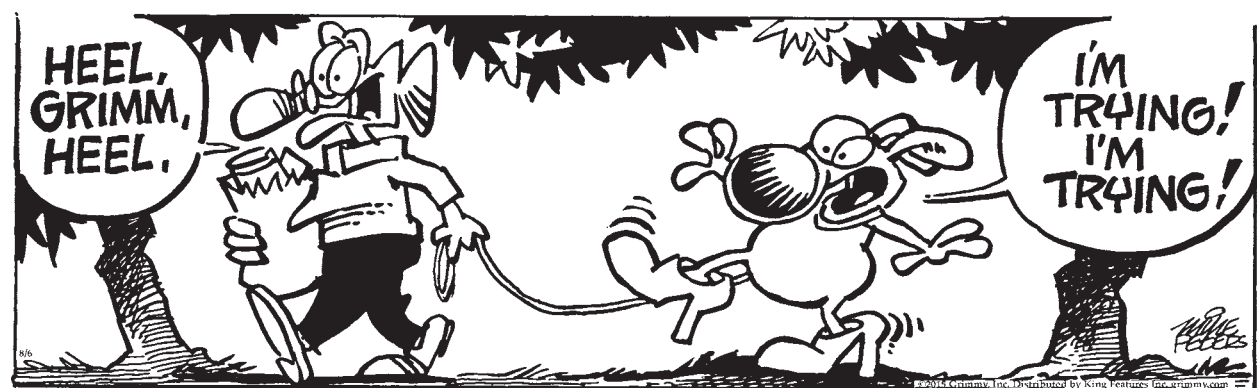
6 Chix



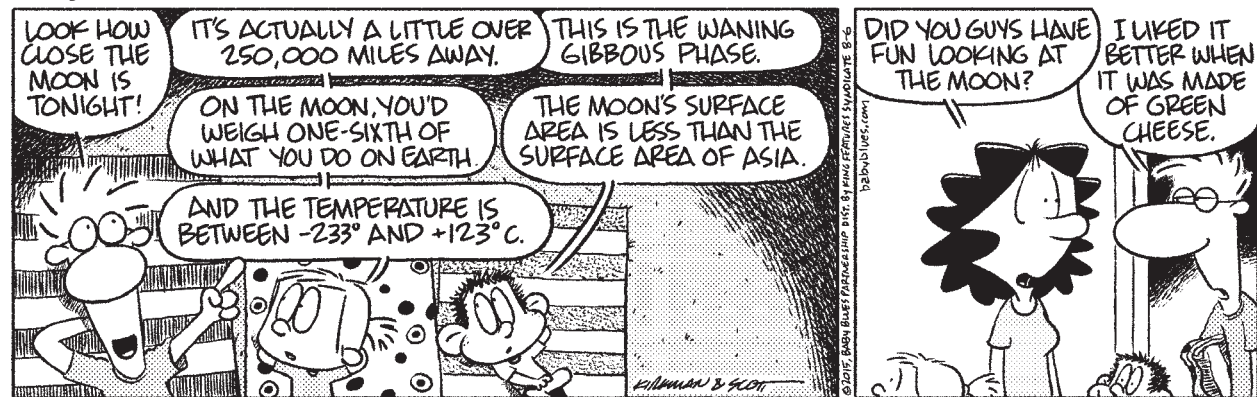
Blondie



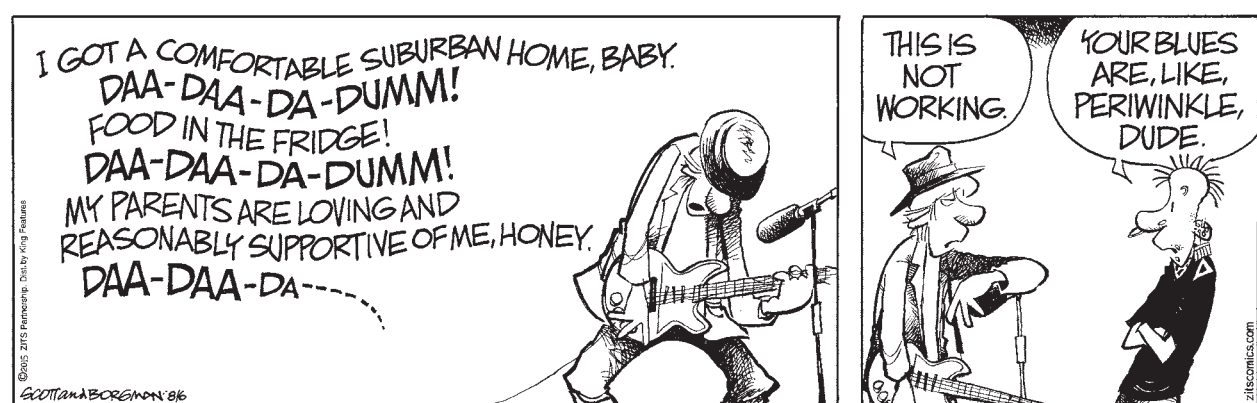
Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

	2		1			4		
	7		4	5		3		
			9	3	6			
	3					1		
	4						2	
		5					6	
			8	7	1			
		9		2	3		4	
		1			4		5	

Difficulty Level ★★★

8/06

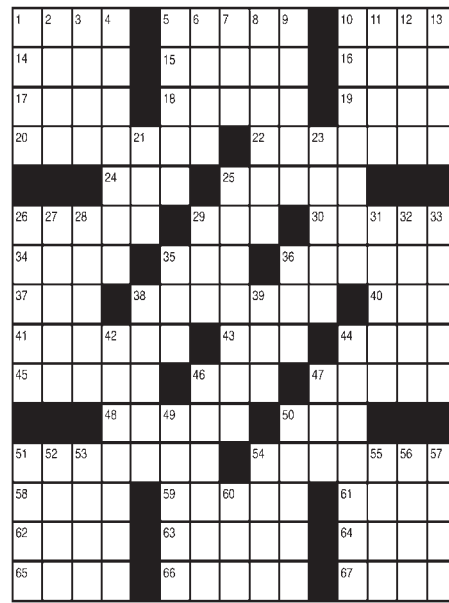
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

3	9	4	5	6	1	8	2	7
7	8	1	4	3	2	6	5	9
6	2	5	8	7	9	4	3	1
9	5	6	3	1	4	7	8	2
1	7	3	6	2	8	9	4	5
8	4	2	9	5	7	1	6	3
2	6	9	7	4	3	5	1	8
5	1	8	2	9	6	3	7	4
4	3	7	1	8	5	2	9	6

ACROSS

- 1 Serling and Stewart
5 Hillbillies
10 Clean the floor with a mop
14 Fired
15 Chili dog topper, often
16 Lunch for señor
17 Credit card
18 Excessive
19 Finds a total
20 Dickinson or Angelou
22 Materials
24 Do drugs
25 Creator
26 Shadowboxes
29 Put a spell on
30 Approaches
34 Story
35 Friend
36 Ms. McArdle
37 Crawling insect
38 Mistaken belief
40 Small amount, as of Brylcreem
41 Prejudiced
43 ___ as the hills
44 Dimwit
45 "Skedaddle!"
46 Hole-making tool
47 Most terrible
48 Outdoor feasts
50 Nickname for Coolidge
51 Attempts
54 Panacea
58 The Bee Gees, for one
59 Movie award
61 ___ collar; pet accessory
62 James or Scott
63 Dishonest folks
64 Plains tribe
65 Shacks
66 Rent long-term
67 Team's defeat
- DOWN
- 1 Invitation letters
2 Columbus, ___
3 Amount to be swallowed
4 One's height
5 On the __; free
6 Hostels
7 El __; Spanish hero
8 Baseball's Sandy ___
9 Move furtively
10 Had the lead role
11 Usually-dry streambed
12 Current letters
13 Supervisor
21 Curvy letter
23 Bandleader ___ Goodman
25 Becomes milder with age
26 Punctures
27 Extreme fear
28 Church table
29 Actor Holbrook
31 Zeal
32 Peruses
33 Wooden shoe
35 Cushion
36 Monogram for author Doyle
38 Leg bone
39 Everybody
42 Taverns
44 Sad
46 One from "Down Under"
47 Armed conflict
49 Ring-shaped island
50 Use foul words
51 Carve in glass
52 German wife
53 Italian auto
54 Vehicles
55 Singing voice
56 Bruce & Spike
57 Young woman
60 Pres. Arthur's monogram



Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

DOLE	CREST	ABLE
AVID	RADIO	BRAG
NETS	ENGROSSING	
ART	RACY	NEEDS
	LOATH	VAN
STEPPE	VICTOR	
PARES	SNEAK	VAT
UPON	PEARL	RENO
DEC	SOAPY	DIRGE
SKATER	POOLED	
	TOM	MOTTO
SPOOL	CANS	OFA
WONDERLAND	AKIN	
APED	EERIE	DEFT
BESS	POLAR	ODES

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8/6/15

MH370

Continued from Page 2

Malaysia Airlines said in a statement that relatives of the passengers and crew "have already been informed and we extend our deepest sympathies to those affected."

The statement said the finding was "indeed a major breakthrough for us in resolving the disappearance of MH370. We expect and hope that there would be more objects to be found which would be able to help resolve this mystery."

Jacquita Gomes, the wife of crew member Patrick Gomes, said she was informed by the airline of the news about a half-hour before Najib's announcement.

"Now that they have confirmed it as MH370, I know my husband is no longer of this world but they just can't leave it with this one flaperon. We urge them to continue searching until they find the plane and bring it back," she said.

"We still need to know what happened. They still need to find the plane. They still need to find the black box to get the truth out," she said. "It brings some sort of closure but not a complete closure. We don't know what happened and where the plane went down. It's not over yet."

Gomes said she hopes to get her husband's body back so that the family can give him a proper burial and say goodbye. □

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wk 32, 2 bedr, 2 balconies
each sleeps 6
wk 4, 1 bdrm, pool side
Gorgeus pool-beach-ocean-
sunset views!
wks can be switched
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TIMESHARE FOR SALE RENAISSANCE

Week	room	price
26	507	\$ 3,500
26	543	\$ 5,300
40	105	\$ 5000
48/49	119	\$ 4,500
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Toxic algae blooming in warm water from California to Alaska

PHUONG LE

Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — A vast bloom of toxic algae off the U.S. West Coast is denser, more widespread and deeper than scientists feared even weeks ago, according to surveyors aboard a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration research vessel.

This coastal ribbon of microscopic algae, up to 40 miles wide and 650 feet deep (60 kilometers wide and 200 meters deep) in places, is flourishing amid unusually warm Pacific Ocean temperatures. It now stretches from at least California to Alaska and has shut down lucrative fisheries. Shellfish managers on Tuesday doubled the area off Washington's coast that is closed to Dungeness crab fishing, after finding elevated levels of marine toxins in tested crab meat.

So-called "red tides" are cyclical and have happened many times before, but ocean researchers say this one is much larger and persisting much longer, with higher levels of neurotoxins bringing severe consequences for the Pacific seafood industry, coastal tourism and marine ecosystems.

Dan Ayres, coastal shellfish manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, said the area now closed to crab fishing includes more than half the state's 157-mile (250-kilometer)-long coast, and likely will bring a premature end to this year's crab season.

"We think it's just sitting and lingering out there," said Anthony Odell, a University of Washington research analyst who is part of a



In this undated handout photo provided by NOAA Fisheries, samples of sea water containing a brownish toxic algae sit in labeled jars aboard a research vessel off the Washington Coast.

Associated Press

NOAA-led team surveying the harmful algae bloom, which was first detected in May. "It's farther offshore, but it's still there."

The survey data should provide a clearer picture of what is causing the bloom which is brownish in color, unlike the blue and green algae found in polluted freshwater lakes. Marine detectives already have a suspect: a large patch of water running as much as 3 degrees centigrade warmer than normal in the northeast Pacific Ocean, nicknamed "the blob."

"The question on everyone's mind is whether this is related to global climate change. The simple answer is that it could be, but at this point it's hard

to separate the variations in these cycles," said Donald Boesch, professor of marine science at the University of Maryland who is not involved in the survey. "Maybe the cycles are more extreme in the changing climate."

"There's no question that we're seeing more algal blooms more often, in more places, when they do occur, they're lasting longer and often over greater geographical areas. We're seeing more events than documented decades ago," said Pat Glibert, professor at Horn Point Laboratory, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science.

Odell recently completed the first leg of the survey,

mostly in California waters. On Wednesday, researchers plan to continue monitoring the sea between Newport, Oregon, and Seattle. The vessel will then go to Vancouver Island, wrapping up in early September. Another research ship is taking samples off Alaska. The brownish bloom was particularly thick off the coast of Santa Barbara, California, and Odell said it was unusually dominated by one type of algae called *Pseudo-nitzschia*, which can produce the neurotoxin domoic acid.

"It's an indication of an imbalance," said Vera Trainer, a research oceanographer with the Northwest Fisheries Science Center in Seattle. "Too much of any

one thing is not healthy for anybody to eat."

Trainer said this bloom is the worst she's seen in 20 years of studying them. Harmful algal blooms have usually been limited to one area of the ocean or another, and have disappeared after a few weeks. This one has grown for months, waxing and waning but never going away.

The current bloom also involves some of the highest concentrations of domoic acid yet observed in Monterey Bay and other areas of the West Coast.

Domoic acid is harmful to people, fish and marine life. It accumulates in anchovies, sardines and other small fish as well as shellfish that eat the algae. Marine mammals and fish-eating birds in turn can get sick from eating the contaminated fish. In people, it can trigger amnesic shellfish poisoning, which can cause permanent loss of short-term memory in severe cases. State health officials stress that seafood bought in stores is still safe to eat because it is regularly tested. While there have been no reports of human illnesses linked to this year's bloom, authorities aren't taking chances in fisheries with dangerous toxin levels. California public health officials have warned against eating recreationally harvested mussels and claims, or any anchovy, sardines or crabs caught in waters off Monterey, Santa Cruz and Santa Barbara counties. Other shellfish harvests are shut down along Oregon's coast. The most recent samples showed the highest-ever recorded concentrations of domoic acid in the internal organs of Dungeness crab, Ayres said. □



Don Johnson, a cast member in the television series "Blood and Oil," poses at the Disney ABC Television Group party during the 2015 Television Critics Association Summer Press Tour at the Beverly Hilton on Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2015, in Beverly Hills, Calif. Associated Press

Don Johnson: I had a big ego during 'Miami Vice' days

ALICIA RANCILIO
Associated Press

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP) — Time has humbled Don Johnson.

It's been 30 years since his TV cop hit "Miami Vice" went on the air and the actor says he's changed since then.

"I was a brash, terrified, young man with a big ego and a lot of ambition," Johnson, now 65, told a panel of TV critics Wednesday.

"I would like to think that

since then I've let those things that don't really serve you kind of fall to the wayside,

and really for me, it's about the joy and enthusiasm that comes with being given the opportunity that comes with being here to do this."

Johnson was promoting his ABC drama, "Blood & Oil." It's set against the biggest oil find in American history in a North Dakota town, where a millionaire is said to be made every day. □

Salma Hayek: Studios 'don't want me but I don't really care'

MARCELA ISAZA
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Salma Hayek says that while Hollywood studios may not be calling as much lately, she's staying plenty busy. "I think they don't want me but I don't really care," said the Oscar-nominated actress. Hayek produced and voices a character in the animated film adaptation of Lebanese writer Kahlil Gibran's 1923 book of prose poetry, "The Prophet." It's a passion project, opening in U.S. theatres on Aug. 7, that she said was partially inspired by her 7-year-old daughter Valentina Pinault.

"It's meaningful. It's hopeful. It's uplifting. It's respectful. It honors children," Hayek said. "Many people tell me, 'But they are not going to like poetry.' Children love poetry. That's why we have the nursery rhymes and then we don't give it to them anymore. It's their first language. They think in metaphor."

Hayek hasn't been as much of a red carpet fixture as she once was in the entertainment world. She said she's been busy with charity events.

"I've been getting awards from different places for



In this July 29, 2015 file photo, Salma Hayek attends the LA Special Screening of "Kahlil Gibran's The Prophet" in Los Angeles. Associated Press

the humanitarian work and I've had a lot of movies come out. Then there is my husband (French billionaire Francois-Henri Pinault) also who takes me to many places. There's that stuff too and I've just been busy with life," she said.

Sitting in a long sleeve striped button-up Gucci wrap dress, the "Frida" actress scrunched her face to display lines when asked about turning 49 next month.

"No Botox yet, you can see," she said, adding that

her 40s had been a "great adventure."

"You don't look as bad as you thought you were going to look. You don't feel as old as you thought you were going to feel. It's a myth. Forties are full of life," she said. "The only thing that is tough about the 40s is when you haven't had a child. This is awful."

She added, "And the men today are terrible because when you are coming to the 40s they ... start going away. But you know what? (Not) the good ones." □

Santa Fe Opera to commission production on Steve Jobs

RUSSELL CONTRERAS
Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP)

— Since his death in 2011, Apple co-founder Steve Jobs has been the subject of documentaries, books, a film and even a graphic novel. Now the technology pioneer will be the focus of an upcoming opera.

In front of the Sangre de Cristo mountains in northern New Mexico, the Santa Fe Opera announced Wednesday that its latest commission will be based on the man who helped revolutionize personal computers, the music business and, of course, brought the

world the iPhone.

"The Revolution of Steve Jobs" will premiere during the company's 2017 season and will be written by composer Mason Bates and librettist Mark Campbell, opera leadership said. According to the opera, the production will examine Jobs facing his own mortality and circles back to the events and people in his past that shaped and inspired him. The move comes as New Mexico in recent years has worked to honor its connections to technology innovators like Jobs and Microsoft founder Bill Gates. For

example, a Route 66 motor lodge in Albuquerque where Bill Gates and Paul Allen lived while launching Microsoft Corp. is being redeveloped into apartments as part of a neighborhood revival project.

While Gates worked on his project, Jobs operated from in his garage in Los Altos, California, and with partner Steve Wozniak released the compact Apple II at the time Albuquerque was a technology hub.

He was fired from Apple in 1985 in a board coup but came back 11 years later. On his second tour, he introduced the iMac, the



In this Sept. 20, 2005 file photo, Apple co-founder Steve Jobs smiles after a press conference as he opens the Apple Expo in Paris. Associated Press

iPod and the iPhone.

That journey is the perfect story for an opera, General Director Charles MacKay said. "We are delighted to take this journey into the life and legacy of a distinctly American figure through the creative genius of Mason Bates and Mark Camp-

bell," MacKay said.

Bates said the story of Jobs is a great intersection of creativity, innovation and human communication. His relationship with those who helped him along that journey also will help tell the story in the opera, Bates said. □



Stephen Hill, from left, Brett Ratner, Mariah Carey, Lee Daniels and L.A. Reid during a ceremony honoring Carey with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on Wednesday, Aug. 5, 2015 in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

Creator says Mariah Carey to guest-star on TV's 'Empire'

MARCELA ISAZA
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Mariah Carey is charting course for a new "Empire" with a guest appearance on the popular Fox television series, the show's creator announced Wednesday. "Empire" creator Lee Daniels announced the Grammy winner would appear on his show while introducing Carey at a ceremony where she received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. "Watch her on 'Empire' you guys. She's coming on 'Empire,'" Daniels said to loud cheers from fans. The Oscar-nominated director didn't elaborate on what role Carey would play, or how she might interact with the show's diva, Cookie Lyon. Neither Fox nor Carey elaborated on Daniels' announcement, but the network is scheduled to present its plans for "Empire" and other upcoming shows at a Television Critics Association panel on Thursday.

Carey, 45, has appeared in the films "Lee Daniels' The Butler" and "Precious: Based on the Novel 'Push' by Sapphire," which

earned Daniels two Academy Award nominations. She has won five Grammy Awards since releasing her debut album in 1990. She also served as a judge on Fox's "American Idol" competition series for one season. □

Grateful Dead members, John Mayer band up for Dead & Company



In this Sept. 26, 2014 file photo, musician John Mayer performs at the Rock In Rio USA event in Times Square in New York.

Associated Press

MESFIN FEKADU
AP Music Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Members of the Grateful Dead are coming back to life in a new supergroup with John Mayer. Mickey Hart, Bill Kreutzmann and Bob Weir have joined with Mayer to form the band Dead & Company. They will perform Oct. 31 at New York's Madison Square Garden. The Dead reunited this summer for the Fare Thee Well tour that included five shows in Chicago and Santa Clara, California,

celebrating their 50th anniversary. "Fare Thee Well proved to me that I'm not done exploring new rhythmic territory with Mickey — I'm recommending that everyone puts their helmet on, because we are going to blast our way into some serious drums and space," Kreutzmann said in a statement Wednesday. "And with Mayer riding shotgun with Weir — we're in good company, so to speak." Though Phil Lesh was part of the Fare Thee Well tour, he is not participating in

Dead & Company. A press release said he will "continue to perform in his band Phil and Friends."

Tickets for the Halloween show will go on sale Aug. 14. Top-tier tickets will be priced under \$100, while \$50 tickets will be available in honor of the Dead's 50th anniversary, according to the press release.

"There is a place where music, dreams and magic come together," Hart said. "Grateful Dead music is a portal to that place. It was built to last!"

Mayer, 37, said that he "deeply" loves the Dead's music.

"It has inspired me in ways I never imagined. To help carry this music is the opportunity and the honor of a lifetime," he said.

Allman Brothers' bassist Oteil Burbridge and Rat-Dog keyboardist Jeff Chimenti will also perform at the MSG show.

"We're not done with these songs and they're not done with us," Weir said. "We're gonna take these old friends on some new adventures." □

School of rock: Plans set for pop music college in Woodstock



In this photo taken in February 2014, Paul Green at the Paul Green Rock Academy, poses for a photo in Woodstock, N.Y.

Associated Press

WOODSTOCK, N.Y. (AP) — An organizer of the original Woodstock concert is behind a venture to establish

a pop music college in the upstate New York town that lent its name to the 1969 music festival.

The Times Herald-Record of Middletown reports Woodstock Music Lab purchased a former elementary school in Woodstock for \$926,000 last Friday. The school will be renovated to include rehearsal rooms, classrooms, recording studios and a music venue. Professional musicians will teach workshops or two-year college-level courses.

Classes are expected to begin in 2016.

Those involved in the venture include Michael Lang, producer of the Woodstock festivals, and Paul Green, founder of School of Rock. Green also runs the Rock Academy in Saugerties.

The 1969 three-day Woodstock concert took place in August in Bethel, 45 miles southwest of Woodstock. □



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Defying Hollywood conventions in 'Diary of a Teenage Girl'

LINDSEY BAHR

AP Film Writer

WEST HOLLYWOOD, Calif.

(AP) — When you make a film where a 15-year-old girl sleeps with her mother's 35-year-old boyfriend, a few things are certain: You're going to make some people uncomfortable and you're going to get feedback. A lot of it. But first time director Marielle Heller knew what she wanted for "The Diary of a Teenage Girl," out Friday, and it didn't involve ensuring people were comfortable.

Heller's adaptation of Phoebe Gloeckner's graphic novel looks at teenage sexuality from the point of view of the teenager. There's no judgment. There's just the story of aspiring artist Minnie Goetze (Bel Powley), a 1970s San Francisco teen with a neglectful, hard-partying single mother (Kristin Wiig) and a yearning for self-actualization. When her mom's boyfriend Monroe (Alexander Skarsgard) opens the door to an intimate encounter, Minnie jumps right in.

Even the first line of the film proved controversial to some: "I had sex today." "Most movies would have spent the first 30 minutes getting to know the character before she had sex," Heller said.

Many advised Heller to consider that approach. "For Minnie, that's where

this chapter of her life begins," she said. A long intro would have only been there to satisfy screenwriting conventions and to coax audiences into the story.

People also suggested

not saying it's some major, master, malicious plan, but I do think there is a serious lack of comfort when it comes to talking about young women and their sexuality."

It was a blessing then that

ties that she needed an actress to satisfy: To look young but also old; to be an every woman but incredibly special; to be believable as a comic book nerd; and to be beautiful and sexually confident but

Simply, it reminded her of being a teenager, and that alone was revolutionary.

"I think there's such a vicious cycle surrounding teenage girls and female sex. People are scared of it, so they won't talk about it and people don't talk about it because they're scared of it," said Powley. "I wanted to be part of this project which was going to potentially break that cycle."

Once she was cast, she and Heller decided to forgo agents and managers and lawyers and "nudity riders" and work something out together. Trust was essential.

"I think having a female director was really important to her and me being an actor meant that I knew what I was asking her to do," Heller said. "I've been topless in a play. I know how hard that is. I knew what I was asking of her and she felt that."

Part of that trust came from knowing they both had the same objective.

"We wanted to make a movie about coming-of-age and exploring sexuality," Powley said. "We didn't want to make a movie about a 15-year-old (expletive) a 35-year-old man."

While the relationship between Minnie and Monroe is controversial on paper, on screen it's never presented as exploitative. □



In this Tuesday, July 28, 2015 photo, Marielle Heller, left, and Bel Powley, pose for a portrait in promotion of their new film "The Diary of a Teenage Girl" at the London Hotel in West Hollywood, Calif. Associated Press

standard Hollywood plot contrivances, like having Minnie end up with a boy her own age at the end, which wholly contradicted the point of the story. This was a story about Minnie's journey to self-acceptance outside of male validation, she thought.

"We're in a place where for so, so, so long men have been controlling movies," Heller said. "I'm

Heller, a writer and actress, found a financier — Caviar — who gave her the freedom to execute her vision, even if it was on a shoe-string budget with lots of help from friends and family.

Most essential, though, was finding the perfect Minnie.

Heller, who'd played the part on stage, had a seemingly impossible list of quali-

ties that she needed an actress to satisfy: To look young but also old; to be an every woman but incredibly special; to be believable as a comic book nerd; and to be beautiful and sexually confident but

still exude the awkwardness of a teenager. Powley stood out as the rare embodiment of all those contradictions. Now 23, Powley had been sending tapes to the U.S. for years and hadn't booked anything. When she put her name in for Minnie, she wasn't expecting much, but she'd never read a role that resonated with her so deeply.

Associated Press

Study throws harsh light on inequality in popular movies

JAKE COYLE

AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) —

Women had less than a third of speaking parts in the most popular films from 2007 to 2014, according to a new study that gives further evidence of persistent inequality in Hollywood, on-screen and off.

The University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism examined the 700 top-grossing films between 2007 and

2014 for the study, released Wednesday. The results, researchers said, reveal "a complete picture of Hollywood's indisputable bias against featuring females, people of color and LGBT characters on screen."

USC found little signs of improvement. In 2014's 100 most popular movies, 21 featured a female lead, about the same percentage as the 20 found among the top films of 2007. Behind the camera

isn't better. Of the top 100 films in 2014, two were directed by women. In 2007, there were three. Of the 700 films examined, three were directed by African-Americans.

"By examining the trends over time, it is clear that no progress has been made either on screen or behind the camera when it comes to representing reality," said USC professor Stacy L. Smith, author of the study. "This report reflects a dismal record

of diversity for not just one group, but for females, people of color and the LGBT community."

The study adds to a growing body of data that has illustrated equality in the movie industry. In May, the American Civil Liberties Union asked state and federal agencies to investigate the hiring practices by the major studios, networks and talent agencies, specifically in regard to the hiring of female directors. USC's Media, Di-

versity and Social Change Initiative has focused on analyzing the most popular movies in recent years, which encompasses most studio releases and some independent films.

It found that among the top 100 movies last year, 73.1 percent of all speaking or named characters were white; 4.9 percent were Hispanic; 12.5 percent were black; 5.3 percent were Asian. None starred a female actor older than 45. □



Ancient Quarry Offers Rare Look At Paris History

(Above and Below) Visitors tour the depths of the Vincennes quarry during a press visit, near Paris, France, Wednesday Aug. 5, 2015. The tunnels zigzagging through limestone were created to provide building materials for Paris. (AP Photo/Jacques Brinon)

MAGGY DONALDSON
Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — The tunnels zigzagging through limestone were created to provide building materials for Paris. Then they became the damp home to vast subterranean mushroom farms. Now, deep beneath the city's largest park, the quarry is usually off-limits, deemed too dangerous for regular visitors.

Unescorted spelunkers face a 60-euro (\$65) fine, but on Wednesday the 20-meter (66-foot) spiral staircase leading down into the earth from the Bois de Vincennes was briefly opened to journalists. Temperatures are a constant 13 degrees Celsius (55 Fahrenheit) and humidity hovers around a swampy 90 percent.

The four-hectare (10-acre) limestone quarry beneath Vincennes is one of several that helped build Paris. From the Middle Ages to 1860 workers toiled underground, mining and fashioning blocks of limestone.



This quarry is "one of the most interesting because it remains in its natural state," said Florence

Cavaillée, who is something of a spokeswoman for the city's underground heritage. Unlike other

quarries that have been renovated or opened to tourists, the tunnels underneath Vincennes still look

essentially as they did in the 19th century, she said. During the 12th and 13th centuries Paris' population spiked, along with the demand for stone to build churches like the Notre Dame Cathedral, prompting deeper underground exploration.

Most of the work -- even the block-carving -- was done inside the galleries themselves, Cavaillée said, because the stone was easier to cut in the high humidity.

The Vincennes quarry once had seven work-sites running at the same time. Overexploitation prompted the city to close its quarries in the late 19th century, fearing potential stability issues. The commercialization of concrete further triggered the abandonment of the industry. From then on, until about 1950, the underground cavities took on a new role as plots for mushroom cultivation.

"Mushrooms were really a specialty of Paris," Cavaillée said. □